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7-3-2013

## Interview with Cynthia Venables

Cynthia Venables

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LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview #278  
VENABLES, Cynthia

**VENABLES, Cynthia**

English major from 1985-1989

*At Winthrop:* 1985-1989

*Interviewed:* July 3, 2013

*Interviewer:* Martha Manning

*Index by:* Breion James

*Length:* 40 minutes

Abstract: In her July 3, 2013 interview with Martha Manning, Cynthia Burris Venables shares her experiences at Winthrop from 1985-1989, as well as her career teaching English. Discussed is Venables coursework as an English major and the rigor of her studies. Additionally, Venables talks about Latin and Biology courses and who her favorite professors were. Venables details what it is like teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, her opinions on technology and teaching, and her accomplishments as an educator. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Alumni, 1980s, English, literature, blue line, exams, coursework, technology, teaching, remedial English, Rock Hill High School, campus events

**Interview Session (July 3, 2013): Digital File**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
00:00:00	<i>Start of Interview</i> /Interviewer's Introduction
00:00:28	<b>MM: And you live?</b>
00:00:30	[censored]
00:00:35	<b>MM: I want you to be aware that what were saying will be collected here on this recorder, do you give your permission?</b>
00:00:42	CV: Yes ma'am
00:00:43	<b>MM: Thank you very much. First what years were you a student here?</b>

- 00:00:51 CV: I started here in august of 1985 and graduated in May of 1989
- 00:01:00 **MM: Ok, what made you decide to come to Winthrop?**
- 00:01:04 CV: Well I'm originally from Fort Mill so I know about Winthrop, I wanted to stay close to home and so I decided to come here. I had several friends from high school that decided to go to Winthrop as well so we kind of all just came here together.
- 00:01:18 **MM: That's wonderful. So you kept letting your friendship grow?**
- 00:01:21 CV: Right
- 00:01:22 **MM: And I assume they're still your friends?**
- 00:01:24 CV: They are
- 00:01:25 **MM: That's wonderful. Did you have to take an entrance exam when you came here?**
- 00:01:31 CV: Just the SAT
- 00:01:32 **MM: SAT. And you had taken that in high school?**
- 00:01:35 CV: Yes ma'am
- 00:01:38 **MM: Ok. You had your own car?**
- 00:01:40 CV: Yes I did.
- 00:01:41 **MM: Did you live here?**
- 00:01:42 CV: I stayed home my freshman year, I lived at home and commuted and then my sophomore year I stayed on campus in Thompson Hall and then my Junior and Senior year I lived off campus in a apartment
- 00:01:54 **MM: Wonderful, you had all kind of experiences didn't you?**
- 00:01:57 CV: Yes ma'am
- 00:02:00 **MM: Tell me about your experience with the roommate?**
- 00:02:05 CV: Well I was fortunate because I was in Thompson hall and I was assigned a

roommate, she was from down near Clemson, I can't even remember the name of the small town now. Her name was Pam and we got along great, she was an elementary education major and music major and I was a English major and we were both going to be teachers. She wanted to teach elementary and I was going to teach high school.

- 00:02:35 **MM: I'm glad to hear you're an English major, remind me to ask you a question when this is over.**
- 00:02:40 CV: Ok
- 00:02:41 **MM: Thank you. Did you eat the three meals here on campus?**
- 00:02:47 CV: I did my freshman year yes ma'am, I mean my sophomore
- 00:02:50 **MM: Your sophomore. When you were living here? How was the food?**
- 00:02:52 CV: It was good, it... They had varieties, they had a potato bar, and I remember that I like potatoes. That's what I ate most of the time baked potatoes and salad, it was good. I enjoyed it
- 00:03:06 **MM: Good. Do you remember having room inspection?**
- 00:03:12 CV: No we never had a room inspection, we had a curfew.
- 00:03:17 **MM: Oh tell me about it.**
- 00:03:18 CV: And I think it was midnight and it was just mainly if you had boys in your dorm, they had to be gone by midnight and if you were out somewhere you had to be in by midnight.
- 00:03:29 **MM: All the doors were locked?**
- 00:03:31 CV: Our RA just came around knocking on everyone's door and make sure everyone was there.
- 00:03:34 **MM: Good**
- 00:03:35 CV: I know a friend and they didn't do it every single day of the year but you never knew when they were going to do it so you knew you had to be in.
- 00:03:41 **MM: Tell me about study time, did you have quiet time that you devoted to study?**

- 00:03:47 CV: Well I did, I was never a procrastinator, I was the one who always studied every day. I didn't wait till the last minute to do everything.
- 00:03:57 **MM: You had a lot of reading to do didn't you?**
- 00:03:58 CV: Yes as a English major all I do is read and write papers
- 00:04:01 **MM: Did you... I read every word**
- 00:04:04 CV: Yes I did most of the time, I have to confess that I had one year where I had four English classes in one semester and if I read everything one night it was like six hundred pages and so there was sometimes I just picked some up and skimmed which was usually world history because that was my least favorite. I mean world literature. So but I read what I could of it and then I would try and skim the rest.
- 00:04:29 **MM: So your work was a load?**
- 00:04:32 CV: It was, it was kind of a stock the first year compared to high school. I mean high school back in my day in high school they had just started with AP classes, advanced classes so most of high school I was just in regular college prep classes which was not nearly as time consuming or as much work as college classes were. But, you know thank goodness I wasn't procrastinator because I studied a little bit everyday so when it came to exam time I wasn't petrified that I had so much to learn. That's just the way I did it
- 00:05:12 **MM: Tell me something about English literature. What was something including that?**
- 00:05:18 CV: Well for example I had the second half of British literature, I had world literature, I had Shakespeare and I can not remember what other literature class I had
- 00:05:33 **MM: I don't see how you didn't get the information mixed up.**
- 00:05:36 CV: Well that's kind of why world history was the one that I kind of skimmed more than I did the others because a lot of time the world literature was some of the same stuff I was reading from British literature so I understood the British and those overlapped a little. And I was doing Shakespeare at the same time which was a lot of British literature. For some reason it never seemed to...British lit went by time period and so you started out working through the time period, whereas world literature, you know they may just say here read this poem by so

and so and we haven't gotten to hear it yet and it just depend on what era it was in.

00:06:16 **MM: Did you have problems analyzing some of that poetry?**

00:06:20 CV: I did. I liked it; I guess that's why I became an English teacher. Occasionally it was difficult, but for the most part it...I didn't find it that difficult. I mean I enjoyed figurative language and trying to interpret what stuff meant anyway> Sometimes professors wouldn't agree on the interpretation.

00:06:43 **MM: Did you have fire drills?**

00:06:46 CV: We didn't have fire drill but it never failed that when I was in the shower, someone pulled the fire alarm. [Laughter] Every time the fire alarm was pulled, I was in the shower. I just grabbed a robe and went outside with my hair in a towel. But I don't remember fire drills.

00:07:03 **MM: I know you didn't participate in what they call the "Blue Line", but do you know anything about that?**

00:07:08 CV: I actually did participate in the Blue Line.

00:07:10 **MM: Did you really?**

00:07:11 CV: We had that. We started out...we marched...

00:07:20 **MM: When did that change?**

00:07:21 CV: I'm not sure when they started doing that.

00:07:21 **MM: Did you wear uniforms?**

00:07:22 CV: We didn't wear uniforms but we...the blue line ceremony was at the very beginning of the school year and we were all instructed that if wanted to participate...

00:07:35 **MM: It was something like a club.**

00:07:36 CV: Well, not really. Everybody knew what the blue line was.

00:07:40 **MM: Did they all participate?**

00:07:41 CV: Not everyone, but it was a long line of people that participated. And I had on,

if I'm not mistaken, I had on a white shirt, white blouse and a navy blue skirt and navy blue heels and we started out at Dinkins. Dinkins was the student union, we started out there and we had a guest speaker and then we all lined up and we walked up Oakland Avenue and around the campus.

00:08:07 **MM: Did you read the paper today?**

00:08:08 CV: I didn't.

00:08:09 **MM: The new president came and did her little introduction to different ones on the campus and they talked about the Blue Line. And if you wanted to be a member of it, you had to pay a thousand dollars.**

00:08:24 CV: Oh really? It cost you to be in the Blue Line now?

00:08:25 **MM: Not really, it's an honor thing.**

00:08:32 CV: It wasn't really a...it was just that one day we celebrated the history of Winthrop.

00:08:36 **MM: That's wonderful. I hadn't heard that before. Really good. One question here, were you required to attend church when you were a student here?**

00:08:47 CV: No, we were not.

00:08:48 **MM: Tell me about some rules and regulations.**

00:08:52 CV: The one thing that we had cultural events that we had to attend. So many hours and so many events we had to attend our freshmen year. Other than that, there weren't that many rules; we just kind of did our thing. You know, we had the curfew.

00:09:12 **MM: Did you have a meeting with the president relaying some of the rules getting started or whatever?**

00:09:23 CV: No ma'am, not that I remember. It's been a while. Um, I don't remember that, no.

00:09:35 **MM: Who was the president?**

00:09:38 CV: [laughter] I knew you was going to ask me that. It was the lady before DiGiorgio.

[crosstalk]

00:10:00 **MM: DiGiorgio came after she did. Did you ever meet him?**

00:10:02 CV: I did. I've met him.

00:10:04 **MM: Did he come to any of your classes?**

00:10:06 CV: If I'm not mistaken, I don't remember what year he started at Winthrop. I think I was already out. Because I remember passing his way, but yes, I met him. Just when I come back for alumni events.

00:10:31 **MM: Did you take any P.E. classes?**

00:10:35 CV: No ma'am.

00:10:37 **MM: When you think of P.E. you're thinking of exercising and stuff like that. Did you take anything like dancing or like golf?**

00:10:53 CV: No ma'am. I didn't do any of that. I took art history. That was the closest thing I came to it.

00:11:03 **MM: P.E. wasn't required?**

00:11:03 CV: It was not required.

00:11:04 **MM: That's what I needed to know.**

00:11:06 CV: Not that I remember. I liked P.E. but I never had the time for that.

00:11:11 **MM; I already asked you about the food in the cafeteria. You ate breakfast too?**

00:11:16 CV: Yes, I'm a morning person. That's when I studied best, everybody else was quiet and everybody else was asleep so I didn't have to worry about the noise.

00:11:29 **MM: You got up about 5 o' clock to get started?**

00:11:31 CV: I did. I made flash cards every with what we learned in class that day. I took all the notes out my notebook and made flash cards for them. I studied flash cards so when it came exam time, I never had to study more than thirty minutes. I just reviewed my cards, but I worked myself to death all semester so it was not a

single exam that I took my entire four year that I could not have failed and still keep the grade I had in my class because I had to make sure grade was high enough because I was gonna make either an A or a B.

00:12:02 **MM: So you were very organized?**

00:12:05 CV: Very organized, very contentious.

00:12:08 **MM: That was my nickname was too, Ms. Organization.**

00:12:12 CV: If I had a paper or if a teacher assigned an assignment and I had all weekend until next class, I always came home and did it right then because I couldn't enjoy the weekend because I would worry about the fact that I had to do it.

00:12:21 **MM: Did they change the rule of the game midstream and then you didn't have to have it done right...**

00:12:26 CV: Well, occasionally, not very often. My problem was especially with writing paper, they gave me the assignment and I'd write right then and I guess it's the English teacher in me. Instead of just writing it and leaving it alone, I kept revising it. So I would do something different to it every day so by the time I turned it in it was nothing what I started with.

00:12:44 **MM: That's beautiful. Did your professors know you did that?**

00:12:49 CV: Yes ma'am. They knew because they would say something like we got something going on on campus this weekend. It was like one of the cultural events. You don't go home and write the paper you go to the cultural event; you'll get the paper done. I still did the paper first.

00:13:18 **MM: Do you remember any of the programs that came here like speaker or concert or plays?**

00:13:23 CV: I don't. I know we had them; I attended them for the cultural events. A lot of times I would go to dance recital for cultural events students put on. I would go to a lot of the piano recitals or the music recitals as cultural events. I take that back, they brought some animals to Dinkins student union. This guy had these rare animals. He had an albino snake, and it was all white and yellow and had these pink eyes and he had it on one of those sticks and it dove off the stick into the crowd and Dinkins cleared. [laughter] Everybody took off running. They found out the snake had gotten under the hood in someone's car. It was crazy. I do remember the animal guy.

- 00:14:27 **MM I wouldn't want to be near that snake. I enjoyed the plays more than anything.**
- 00:14:30 CV: You know, I know I went to a play, I went to a lot of art exhibits that they had as well but I'm sure I went to a play, I just don't remember.
- 00:14:39 **MM: You've already talk to me about the requirements and you had to participate and go to so many.**
- 00:14:47 CV: Right that was the only rule I really remember like I said the curfew and so many cultural events you had to attend.
- 00:14:54 **MM: And were you a member of any kind of club?**
- 00:14:55 CV: I was the Vice President of the English Honors Society.
- 00:15:00 **MM: Wonderful!**
- 00:15:03 CV: And, I think that was about it. It was very time consuming.
- 00:15:14 **MM: How many people were in that club? Do you remember?**
- 00:15:17 CV: Maybe about 10 or 12 of us.
- 00:15:19 **MM: Those were the top students?**
- 00:15:21 CV: Right, you had to have a certain average to be eligible for it.
- 00:15:29 **MM: Tell me about some of your professors**
- 00:15:32 CV: Oh, let's see.
- 00:15:33 **MM: Your favorite class**
- 00:15:34 CV: My favorite writing class was with Dorothy Thompson. And as a freshman that was my first writing class, WRIT 101. She was awesome, I enjoyed that. Probably my favorite professor was my Shakespeare professor, Dr. Ross.
- 00:15:50 **MM: How do you say his name?**
- 00:15:51 CV: Dr. Ross, R-O-S-S. He was fun and entertaining. He really wanted you to understand Shakespeare, he was real good. You know Shakespeare always had these sexual references or something and I just remember him, he was grey haired when I had him. He would blush and his face would turn red anytime he started

talking about the references. I saw him not long ago at a Winthrop basketball game. He looks exactly the same, hadn't aged a day.

00:16:24 **MM: Does he remember you?**

00:16:25 CV: He did.

00:16:25 **MM: I would think so since you were such a good student.**

00:16:28 CV: But um, those were my two favorites. I took a lot of biology classes as well so I enjoy science and I do not remember his name, but it was experimental biology and that was a fun class. That was all we did was experiment animals and I remember him giving me the pet tarantula as one of the experiments. It was the coolest thing because I never seen a tarantula shed its skin because it splits open underneath and it crawls out. I woke up one morning and there were two identical spiders because one was the shell, but anyway it was fascinating.

00:17:04 **MM: I never heard of that!**

00:17:05 CV: Yeah, it was neat. But um, I liked biology, I liked that. Um, I remember, I can't remember his name, but I took Latin. Two years of Latin. I should remember his name; I can see his face plain as day.

00:17:18 **MM: Can you speak Latin?**

00:17:21 CV: [laughter] I can a little bit. I can talk to the pope. I can say *Italia insulae*, Italy is an island. [Continues to speak Latin]

00:17:36 **MM: Did you have a lab for that language?**

00:17:37 CV: We didn't. I had taken Latin two years in high school and so when I came in I took that probably and probably the most helpful class and being an English teacher and major altogether was...um, I don't remember who taught the class but it was Greek and Latin roots. All we did was learn thousands and thousands of meanings of Greek and Latin roots because I can remember I could figure of the meaning of any word in the English language because I knew all the Greek and Latin roots. So that was the most helpful class. I enjoyed science and English but Dr. Ross was probably my most favorite English teacher and then Mrs. Thompson.

00:18:14 **MM: So you're saying that Latin words, you know the root beginning sound of it?**

- 00:18:20 CV: Well yeah if I know what root means for example *scope* means to look and so microscope means to look, you know *micro* means small so that would mean to look at small stuff. *Endo* means in size and so endoscope means to look in size and so as long as you know the little parts. I teach my students how to do that and it's really helpful for them.
- 00:18:37 **MM: That's good. Where do you teach?**
- 00:18:38 CV: At Rock Hill High School.
- 00:18:40 **MM: And you teach?**
- 00:18:41 CV: Ninth grade English
- 00:18:45 **MM: How many students do you have?**
- 00:18:47 CV: I normally have about sixty-five to seventy each semester.
- 00:18:52 **MM: And that is with four different classes?**
- 00:18:53 CV: Yes ma'am.
- 00:18:56 **MM: Are they good students? Do they do their work?**
- 00:18:59 CV: No ma'am. [Laughter] I wish, I try to get them motivated to do it as much as I can, make it as interesting and entertaining. Unfortunately, there's...I've been teaching since I graduated since 1990, it was my first graduating class and it's a drastic difference in students today than students when I first started.
- 00:19:16 **MM: Tell me about it**
- 00:19:18 CV: Well back then they had respect, they did what you asked, you know it was yes ma'am, no one argued with you. They didn't feel entitled they saw education as a privilege whereas the kids today think their just entitled to it, doesn't matter how they act I'm supposed to try to educate them. They just had the since of entitlement.
- 00:19:41 **MM: Parent/teacher conferences?**
- 00:19:42 CV: Quite a few of those [laughter] I do, the only problem is though, um, a lot of my students you know are ninth graders so they're fourteen, some of them I've actually taught their parents and their parents weren't that much different from the students. You know so sometimes you think oh this is a pointless conversation.

- 00:20:03 **MM: Do any of them put the blame on you when they do bad?**
- 00:20:07 CV: A lot of times, yes. And that's the other thing, they don't accept. In school or anything it's always someone else's fault, they never take responsibility for their actions or anything.
- 00:20:18 **MM: You have to keep records?**
- 00:20:21 CV: Oh, I do, very much so.
- 00:20:23 **MM: Like we had VSAP?**
- 00:20:26 CV: We do, we have, well my students have to take a state test each year. At the end of English 1 state given test EOC, the end of course exam. They have to take that. We also do what's called a MAPS testing to test their reading level periodically during the year and it's suppose to improve
- [crosstalk]
- 00:20:44 **MM: On what reading level were most of your students?**
- 00:20:45 CV: I teach remedial English, I teach kids who've made it to high school and still read on third, fourth, and fifth grade level.
- 00:20:53 **MM: I cannot believe that. How can they understand their basic...?**
- 00:20:56 CV: Well, that's the thing, I don't teach a whole lot of literature. I teach a whole lot of how to read and reading skills and inference and context clues and things like that.
- 00:21:06 **MM: Third tenses**
- 00:21:06 CV: Third tenses, grammar
- [crosstalk]
- 00:21:14 **MM: They write a whole lot of grammar don't they?**
- 00:21:15 CV: Cell phones are the cause of that. When cell phones came out, if text messages wouldn't go through unless they were grammatically correct, kids would automatically learn how to write but they would only try to write an essay with text you know b/c for because. Don't do that on essays its okay on the phone

but not on essays. So we spend a lot of time trying to teach that this is not right and how you're supposed to do it.

00:21:36 **MM: So they like spelling skills?**

00:21:38 CV: Very much so.

00:21:39 **MM: Do they use the dictionary?**

00:21:42 CV: They try to use their dictionary on their phones but they don't want to use a real dictionary.

00:21:46 **MM: That's what I mean, a real dictionary**

00:21:47 CV: Oh yes, I make mines use a real dictionary.

00:21:50 **MM: They have their own dictionary?**

00:21:51 CV: Yes, I have a classroom set of dictionaries.

00:21:52 **MM: What do you think about the students getting their own laptops?**

00:21:56 CV: Well, and the iPads that just came out. It's good in theory, but it's more of a distraction for the students than it's an educational tool. In my classroom, I have seven desktop computers that they do work on to help them improve their reading skills. And we rotate; I teach small groups and ill have three different things going on the classroom at one time. And so, trying to monitor those seven kids, I always sit where I can see those screens to make sure their not on something you know listening to music it's not like their doing anything really bad but you know doing anything other than what they're supposed to do so I can imagine if I put that small device in their hands that I can't see constantly what they're going to be getting into. I'm a little nervous about now having one.

00:22:45 **MM: Whose idea was that?**

00:22:47 CV: Our superintendent. It really is an educational tool if used correctly. The only problem is when you have classes that are larger than the classes that we have, it's hard. As long as they understand what happens, say a fight breaks out in class; they're going to video it on their phone on their iPad. They video it and then they post it for the whole world to see what you know and they don't really understand the implications of what they're doing. They just think oh cool fight, let me record it and then they post it. That's bad publicity for the school district.

00:23:25 **MM: It's hard for me to sit and conceive all of that.**

- 00:23:28 CV: I think it will get better. I have a child whose in the fourth grade, rising fifth grade, he just finished fourth grade; he had an iPad in school. And then my middle school daughter whose going into seventh grade, she had an iPad. We bought them iPads to take to school and use. At that age, you know, they've started from kindergarten with these iPads and they know how to use them, they know the rules, they've been trained. But when you just give it to a high school student whose not use to having it, and say well here all of these rules and just expect them to follow them, you have a problem. So, I'm sure by the time my son and my daughter and kids who are in kindergarten now get to high school, it won't be an issue nearly as much. I think it would have been wiser to start out with hey lets give them to kindergarten through fifth grade and as they get to middle school, they'll all have them and keep working from there instead of give some to middle and high school now. Middle school you can still keep control a little bit but high school they're so use to having access to anything they want when they want, they don't see anything wrong with it.
- 00:24:34 **MM: I finished high school in '53. We didn't have a phone at home. Nobody had television.**
- 00:24:41 CV: Well my students laugh because I said guys y'all don't understand, we didn't have cell phones. I said my phone was a party line. I had to pick it up and hope my neighbor wasn't on it so I could make a phone call to call my friends. We got computers my senior year of high school and not a single one of them was for word processing. We still had typing and type writers but all we used them for was for programming. We had four computers in our math classes to do computer programming and that was it.
- 00:25:06 **MM: So when you did all of your projects, you were just on a manual typewriter?**
- 00:25:09 CV: I was. Most of my papers my freshmen and sophomore year, I can't remember, it was during my time here that Winthrop opened the computer labs because I do remember we had the big hard disks that we could put in. I remember typing a twenty-two page paper that I was typing for an English class and boy tripped over the cord and unplugged the computer and I lost the whole paper and had to start over typing. I was on like page eighteen. I was like you're going to go with me to my professor and explain why I'm going to be late. I remember him tripping and it's not like now when you can just hit save and it stores, it wasn't that simple back then.
- 00:25:55 **MM: I'm writing a book now and I'm careful every night to put save before I do anything else because I don't want all my work going down the drain.**

- 00:26:06 CV: See back then if you didn't have a disk in it then, I can't even remember that might have been before disks, but there was no way to just save it onto the computer you know because it was a school computer.
- 00:26:17 **MM: Yes, everybody would be using them. When did you get your computer?**
- 00:26:23 CV: Oh, I never had a computer in college. I didn't get a personal computer until probably maybe 15 to 20 years ago. I've been teaching for a while before I actually had my own computer.
- 00:26:38 **MM: I was lost when I moved here seven years ago. Robbie and Joyce went and bought me one and I have learned so much.**
- 00:26:48 CV: I mean it's great because you can access, you can find anything. The only problem is our students think just because it's on the internet, it's true. That just added more complication to the English teachers trying to teach them what the difference is between a valid source and an invalid source. So now we have to change our curriculum and adding on .com, .edu, .org, what do all of those stand for, which ones are reliable and which ones you use.
- 00:27:17 **MM: When you write a paper and you use information from the computer, is there a certain way to document that?**
- 00:27:20 CV: There certainly is and it varies just based on what information is provided on the website. That's another thing, it's hard to teach them how to do a works cited or bibliography because it depends. You have to pull up the website and see what information is provided to show them where it goes.
- 00:27:35 **MM: And plagiarism would be...?**
- 00:27:38 CV: Plagiarism is bad with the internet because you know, my kids bust their hearts, they'll cut it and paste it and it's a different font from what they've been typing.
- 00:27:52 **MM: But if they get the information and rewrite it in their own words.**
- 00:27:56 CV: Well what I had mine do when they're doing research; I make them make their note cards, I make them make direct quotes, so that when they go to rewrite it, if they don't know how to put it in their own words, I can help them take it and show them how to make it in their own words so that it is not plagiarized. That's just an extra step you have to do whereas with the computer they think oh I can

just cut and paste. They still don't understand that even though it's on the computer, it still belongs to someone.

00:28:23 **MM: How many students are in one class?**

00:28:27 CV: I have the lower level of kids so I usually have a maximum of 21.

00:28:34 **MM: How much growth do you see in a student a year?**

00:28:38 CV: Actually a lot, this past year has been my best year ever.

00:28:40 **MM: Third and fourth grade reading level?**

00:28:43 CV: Third and fourth grade reading level, and I teach them all year. They don't have any just first semester, I have them all year. I was fortunate, this year I had the best test scores I've ever had for my end of course exam. I had 44 kids take it and 37 of the 44 passed which is a miracle because normally only half of them pass.

00:29:03 **MM: That's great!**

00:29:04 CV: So that went really well this year and we worked really hard to get them there. But it is hard, it's a very, you know you have to start out teaching them how to find details and how to find the main idea and then you just have to summarize.

00:29:22 **MM: Do you use the umbrella technique teaching them to write?**

00:29:24 CV: I do, sometimes we do what's called the hamburger. We do that a lot. That helps them understand it better.

00:29:40 **MM: You enjoy your job don't you?**

00:29:41 CV: I love my job. I love what I do very much.

00:29:44 **MM: I love mines too. I had first grade all my time. Did you do practice teaching?**

00:29:52 CV: I did teaching at Indian Land High School.

00:29:58 **MM: Indian Land. I did some student evaluations there in the lower grades when we lived at Trinity York, and I was working here at Winthrop. Do you remember the APT instrument? Aptitude Performance Teaching.**

- 00:30:15 CV: Yes, I came through under APT. I still plan my lesson in the APT format.
- 00:30:25 **MM: You like that system?**
- 00:30:26 CV: I do. It works, and you know pretty much, they've changed over the years. They keep coming up with these different systems basically; they just call them different things. You have the same stuff; they just call it something different.
- 00:30:40 **MM: I was certified in Columbia and then when we moved to Trinity York, I came over her and applied. I worked with Betsy Moody and Anne Kane.**
- 00:30:51 CV: I remember Betsy Moody.
- 00:30:53 **MM: We worked with student teaching and I went out into the schools. I taught a whole lesson on the TV and they had their copy of APT and they had to site whatever went on so they could be able to recognize it and do it themselves. I would go and five, several levels after you did your objective and I went four times. Each time they added the next level. The final time, all of it had to be there. That was fun.**
- 00:31:33 CV: Yeah, I still plan my lesson that way; it's just the way I was trained.
- 00:31:45 **MM: Would you recommend this college?**
- 00:31:46 CV: Yes, as a matter of fact, my oldest daughter had applied and been accepted, and ordered books, and went to orientation and then decided at the last minute that she didn't want to be a teacher, she wanted to be in the Dental Hygiene Program, so she decided to go to York Tech. [laughter] But yeah, I recommend it highly. I enjoyed it and I tried to explain it to her, you know even though I lived in Fort Mill, if you want to live on campus, it doesn't matter where you're from, your house could be across the street, it's a whole other world. You still feel independent, you still feel as if you've moved and went out of state or out of town to go somewhere.
- 00:32:23 **MM: I've been meeting foreign students here from New England.**
- 00:32:24 CV: There were a few, not a lot. I remember being in the elevator with some in Dinkins one time and I saw, it was kind of crazy, but when I lived in Fort Mill, it was a small town then, not like it is now, I have never seen a Hispanic student until I came to Winthrop. Never in my life, you know in Fort Mill, we had African Americans and we only had a very few of African Americans and I've never seen a Hispanic student. We had one Asian student who was adopted at our school in Fort Mill. I met my first Hispanic student here at Winthrop.

- 00:33:00 **MM: Good, I was teaching at Union, USC and I had two Spanish students in the reading class. They were coming to try to learn the basic vocabulary skills.**
- 00:33:15 CV: And I'm trying to think, I took Latin here for my foreign language. I think they had French. I don't even remember if they had Spanish when I was here because when I was in high school all that was offered was Latin and French.
- 00:33:28 **MM: I took Spanish, not here. I took it in college.**
- 00:33:35 CV: I don't even remember what languages they offered here.
- 00:33:38 **MM: Are many of your faculty member graduates of Winthrop? Do you even know?**
- 00:33:44 CV: My faculty I had here at Winthrop or where I work?
- 00:33:45 **MM: No, where you work?**
- 00:33:51 CV: Several of them are. My best friend teaches at Rock Hill High School, and she went here. She graduated two years after I did. I think there are quite a few even if they didn't graduate from Winthrop as an undergraduate, they came here to get their Master's.
- 00:34:08 **MM: To get their certification?**
- 00:34:09 CV: Right.
- 00:34:10 **MM: It was a great thing when they chose to pick Winthrop either way. Do you know it was first in Columbia?**
- 00:34:18 CV: Oh, really? I know it used to be an all-female teaching school, but I didn't know that.
- 00:34:23 **MM: And it had competition with Carolina. So they sited out a place that would be more comfortable and they came here. The first students that came here paid 129 dollars a year compared to what it is now. But they only had like two buildings and how could they have built and grow without money. Who was your advisor?**
- 00:35:01 CV: My advisor if I'm not mistaken, for teaching was Dr. Joy Burbon.

00:35:07 **MM: Bourbon. B-U-R-B-O-N?**

00:35:08 CV: I think it was B-E-R-M-A-N. I think she was over the English people who wanted to teach.

00:35:23 **MM: Do you have anything else that you would like to add to this conversation?**

00:35:28 CV: Not that I know of, I mean other than that I enjoyed it. It well prepared me for what I do.

00:35:34 **MM: How did it prepare you for the NTE?**

00:35:37 CV: Oh, the NTE; the most dreaded test on the face of the Earth. The English NTE was extremely difficult. It prepared me well for it. I mean obviously, I passed the first go round so that was good. I think the only thing that I that I would complain about my Winthrop experience is the classes that I took that didn't help me. I only had one grammar class and that was it to get my English degree. Everything else was all literature based. I only had one grammar, it was with Dr. Lincoln, which I enjoyed and I liked it, but it was transformational grammar. For some reason everyone thought that it was going to be a big shift in grammar but we stopped doing traditional grammar and did transformational grammar.

00:36:29 **MM: Tell me the difference.**

00:36:30 CV: I'm not sure what the difference is except that he taught us transformational grammar and I didn't learn grammar until I started teaching. You know, that's what they need the most for their writing. I mean they can't even identify the subject and the verb to make a sentence. I just remember thinking I'm so unprepared for this. So, that would be my only recommendation. I didn't mind transformational grammar. I really, honestly can't explain the difference. All I know is that it didn't go the normal way. We didn't talk about subjects and verbs and subject-verb agreement or pronoun and antecedent agreement or any of those things. We did sentence diagramming and things like that which we don't do in high school anymore.

00:37:17 **MM: You don't?**

00:37:18 CV: We don't. I teach mines sometimes how to basic diagram a sentence so they can see it. But that would be my only thing if I had to go back and say one thing I wish they would have done differently, that they would have taught us more grammar classes for people who were going to teach because technically that's

pretty much half of what you teach, half literature, half grammar. I was well prepared for the literature part but not so prepared for the grammar part.

00:37:44 **MM: But everything else was very positive?**

00:37:45 CV: yes, everything else was very positive. I never had a negative experience, never had a professor that I couldn't stand or anything like that.

00:37:57 **MM: Have you been back to get a Master's?**

00:37:58 CV: I have not. When I was married, my husband got a Master's and a Doctorate and so I had small kids and so we both couldn't be doing all those things at the same time. I am considering going back and Winthrop doesn't have it unfortunately, but I do want to go get my Master's in library science so I can be a librarian.

00:38:15 **MM: Wonderful!**

00:38:16 CV: So I think I will go to USC and do that.

00:38:19 **MM: That would be a traveling thing. You won't be able to stay there.**

00:38:23 CV: Oh no, it's mostly online. You just have to go down for certain classes.

00:38:30 **MM: That would be good.**

00:38:34 CV: And I'm all for technology however, as I tell my students, you got to understand, it's great to have the eReaders and all that when you can just pull a book up but there's nothing better than holding a book in your hand and smelling that book.

00:38:46 **MM: Thank you! You can't replace it, getting those little reading things. My daughter gave me one. I'd much rather hold my book.**

00:38:58 CV: Right, you can get them cheap. You can get any book cheaper online just about, but I'd rather pay the extra three or four dollars so I can hold the book in my hand. And if I had a preference, we would still have the catalog cards. I can find stuff much faster on there than I can on a computer.

00:39:17 **MM: When you go to the library here, there's not a card catalog?**

00:39:18 CV: No ma'am, it's all electronic now.

- 00:39:21 **MM: I'd be lost.**
- 00:39:21 CV: I know.
- 00:39:23 **MM: I was in some of the first that did the microfilm. When I came here for my Master's in the 70's, I had to take a course on how to use the microfilms.**
- 00:39:38 CV: I use the microfilm here all the time to do research.
- 00:39:44 **MM: But it sounds like you really enjoy doing research and writing papers. Well I am so glad you came. I bet you learned a lot today that hadn't come out before.**
- 00:39:59 CV: I do remember the blue line. I'm surprised no one else from the 80's mentioned the blue line.
- 00:40:04 **MM: every different degree level brings something different and I'm so glad you came to learn something about your interest.**
- 00:40:19 *End of interview*