

Gibson makes teaching count

JOE WISWELL

Staff Writer

Taylor Gibson has only taught mathematics at NCSSM for two years now, but, like most people who walk through these halls, two years has been more than enough time for him to find an identity here.

As a teacher of AP Calculus AB and Pre-calculus with Advanced Topics, his classes have a friendly atmosphere which works to create excitement about math.

He said he taught as though, “students don’t care what you know until they know how much you care.” And Gibson certainly does make people the emphasis of his classroom.

This focus is not just the result of his character or a desire to have fun, though: this is also the result of the perspective Gibson brings to NCSSM.

Coming from a family heavily involved in the STEM fields, Gibson arrived at Georgia Tech looking to major in computer science. He quickly realized, however, the major was not for him and next moved on to biomedical engineering.

He says these new classes were “lots of fun,” but when he started looking for jobs in the field, he was not excited by his opportunities.

At that point in his life he did a lot of ominous-sounding “reflection” about what he wanted to do with his life, and

a short time later he was at the University of Georgia getting a master’s degree in math education.

After graduating he taught in public and private schools throughout Texas, Georgia, and most recently North Carolina.

When asked why he ultimately made the decision to become a teacher, Gibson said it was because all of his great teachers had such a memorable and lasting impact on his own life.

Many of his teachers

took the time to relate to him, which caused him to really care about the subjects they were teaching.

This is one of the things so many students love about NCSSM: it has teachers whose passions are twofold, both for the subjects they teach, and the teaching itself, enthusiasms which are ultimately inseparable.

In a school with research,

mentorship, advanced courses, and numerous other activities,

in career direction, Gibson understands that in order

they can emerge from NCSSM with a massive head start for college.

Having personality in education goes far beyond college though; understanding people is important in any subject. The question, “Why does any of this matter?” is one which has been asked by practically everyone at this school (whether said aloud or not). Gibson is adamant that we should not be disappointed.

While there is something very thrilling in math itself, he believes we really do math for people.

Math is no longer just about solving for x or graphing an equation, as computers have taken a lot of that out of our hands. Now, we can get right down to the “why?” of problems.

Not that the nitty-gritty of long division is a bad thing to know, but using computers liberates us to pursue questions which can really make a difference in people’s lives.



Photo courtesy of Chichi Zhu

Gibson creates a ubiquitous and friendly learning environment for all of his students. Through thoughtful one-on-one discussion, interesting and relatable lessons, and spirited and unconventional teaching methods, he makes math enjoyable for everyone who enters his classroom.

all of which allow students to specialize very early in their education, these dual passions are paramount.

Without teachers who really care, not only would classes would not be nearly as interesting or beneficial, but students would also be far more confused about their careers.

Coming from a background with several large changes

for a student to reach their full potential they have to be brutally honest with themselves.

Having teachers who care about students personally is more than just nice, it’s crucial for the students’ professional growth. If students can have the support they need in order to change directions in their studies, or just keep going when the going gets tough,

Classic literature vlogs thrive online

REBECCA LIU

Opinion Editor

Students might remember having to read Shakespeare plays in class, or watch them performed on screen. Maybe you have had to crack open a copy of one of Jane Austen’s many works of literature for an English course.

But nowadays, you do not have to open up a book, or watch Colin Firth on film in order to get a taste of classic literature.

Today, with the advent of YouTube and the innovation of certain individuals, you can watch these works come to life right on your computer screen.

A recently emerging genre of entertainment is the “literary inspired web series.” They are presented in the form of vlogs or “video blogs” (as Beatrice kindly informs Benedick in *Nothing Much to Do*, an adaptation of—you guessed it—*Much ado about Nothing*), and are readily accessible on YouTube.

Most webseries include episodes of about three to eight minutes, and primarily depict characters venting their feelings to the camera.

Many of them, such as the *Anne of Green Gables* inspired

Green Gables Fables and Jane Austen’s *Emma* inspired *Emma Approved* are also aided with other forms of social media. The characters use websites such as Tumblr or Twitter to enhance their stories.

Ever since Primetime Emmy-winning series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

(critics) has become a catalyst for a brand new genre.

There have been adaptations of Peter Pan, Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, Jane Eyre, Frankenstein, and the stories of Edgar Allen Poe.

These literary adaptations allow for more possibilities than their original works provide.

There is more

“For so many people these web series became their passion project,”

- Kyle Waters, star of *The New Adventures of Peter and Wendy*

was uploaded in 2012, a whole new type of YouTube videos has surged into existence.

What started off as an uncertain investment by Hank Green of the Vlogbrothers (for who knew how a modern vlog adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* would fare with YouTube’s harsh

racial diversity available in many cases, and different relationships between the original characters.

For example, in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* Elizabeth Bennet’s friend Charlotte Lucas becomes Charlotte Lu, and the ever-charming Charles Bingley becomes the medical school student Bing Lee. Lizzie Bennet does not reject Mr.

Collins’s proposal of marriage, but instead rejects childhood friend Ricky Collins’s proposal of a business partnership.

Senior Teresa Meng cited this diversity as one of the best aspects of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, claiming that “all these changes make the story that Austen tells much more plausible in the real world.”

Produced by “The Candle Wasters,” *Nothing Much to Do* is another work that uses the same type of creative license—arguably more so than *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

Lady Beatrice and Lord Benedick have become high-schoolers in Auckland, New Zealand’s fictional Messina High School. While Beatrice and Hero are still cousins, Hero’s father Leonato has become Hero’s older brother (but is still her guardian, as Leo’s and Hero’s mothers have gone on vacation).

Beatrice and Benedick’s once vague backstory is instead one of scorned friendship, and Balthazaar becomes much more than a musician and servant of Leonato’s household. One of the most prominent differences between the vlog adaptation and the original work is that Hero has a larger speaking role.

When asked about his

thoughts on *Nothing Much to Do*, and if he believed that it was a good adaptation, senior Pranav Kemburu responded, “I don’t just think it’s good, I think it’s great.”

He also stated, “At first I thought it was real for a long time, and I really like how they recreated it into something that’s believable in today’s world.”

It stands to reason that if Hollywood borrows so heavily from literature, then online video should as well. Many of these literary vlogs are brought to life through crowd funding and ad revenues, used to fund often young and ambitious filmmakers.

The production studio Pemberley Digital, creators of *Frankenstein M.D.* and *Emma Approved* was the innovating force behind this trend but have caused a wide variety of spin-offs.

Although these vlog series are no substitute for WECS reading, they are an educational and enjoyable way to pass the time.

So if you do have nothing much on your plate—or rather, nothing much to do—consider looking into one of these video blog adaptations. The classics are available in a way never seen before.