

# The teacher files

## A conversation with Clackamas Community College math teacher Melinda Nickas

BY SAIGE KEIKKALA

Curious about your professor's teaching style and personality? A new instructor will be featured every issue. Here is an interview held with Melinda Nickas, 46, who teaches math for multiple levels here on campus.

**The Clackamas Print:** What class do you teach?

**Melinda Nickas:** I teach Math 111, 112, 243 and 211 ... everything from math for elementary students to statistics.

**TCP:** What is your teaching style?

**MN:** Very friendly. I like cooperative group learning. I like having students work together to solve their problems and that would be my preferred style. Group centered, how's that? Student centered and group learning.

**TCP:** Where are your classes held?

**MN:** Oh they're everywhere. Math classes are everywhere. I have one in Barlow, one in Roger Rook and two in Streeter. So Streeter is the math department building, there's only two classrooms in there, so we don't get those all the time.

**TCP:** Part-time or full-time teacher?

**MN:** Part-time.

**TCP:** How do you view teaching?

**MN:** Oh, I love it. This is the best job. This is the best job. I have taught middle school math, high school math and I just think this is the best.

**TCP:** What jobs have you had in the past?

**MN:** I have taught middle school and high school, and I've taught here. I also taught online high school, which was awful. I was a court reporter for a long time, a court stenographer. So I did that and I became a math teacher.

**TCP:** Is college the best?

**MN:** It's the best and I don't want to sound like I'm sucking up, but the Clackamas staff and students really are awesome. They really, really are. It's great.



Photo by Chelsea Pagan

**TCP:** Do you like it here at CCC?

**MN:** Clearly! Yes, I do.

**TCP:** What sort of materials do you use for teaching?

**MN:** That's a good question. I love being able to show videos, but there aren't that many fun math videos. I like to do class activities where they get to discover things on their own, and I try to use direct instruction as little as possible. That's my main style.

**TCP:** What are your hobbies?

**MN:** I love food. I love exercise and I love outdoors and I have a cute dog and my family. And I enjoy my friends.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and space.*



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