

# alumni profile



## Jordan Schugar '94

Bullis graduate finds a way to combine his love of technology and English to improve student learning.

Jordan Schugar '94 still smiles when he thinks of his dreams after high school. "I went to college to be an engineer. I never would have guessed I'd ever teach English." But once he got to college, he quickly changed his mind.

Jordan traces a love for English back to 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Bullis. "I immediately loved interpreting literature and had lots of great teachers, including Larry Klinger and Doug London. Larry Klinger made it fun. With his quirky personality, we didn't realize we were learning anything, but he fostered in me a love of English." And Doug London, also, "was instrumental in my literary pursuits of naturalism." Soon after starting at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Jordan realized that for him "reading outside under a tree was more appealing than writing computer code in a windowless lab," so he switched and became an English major. After graduating in 1998 he went on to earn a master's in English Literature at

Humboldt State University in 2000.

A visit home the next year resulted in a teaching job at Bullis. Jordan chuckles as he recalls the start of his first day. "I was nervous walking into the teachers' lounge, but was immediately calmed by the warm and genuine welcome from my new colleagues. Some were even my former teachers! Shirley Kirkwood in particular was always great. She really made my time teaching at Bullis very special."

From 2000-2003, Jordan taught English in both the Lower and Upper Schools along with media journalism, and was quite impressed—although not surprised—that Bullis was ahead of its time with the integration of technology in the classroom. Jordan credits Ty Lloyd (Bullis' current systems administrator) and Geoff Wagg (former director of technology) for mentoring his own appreciation of the benefits of technology in teaching and education.

Jordan applied his experience as a Bullis soccer player to help coach the varsity boys' team with George Moore, and is especially proud of his role in helping to spearhead the ice hockey program, which Jordan tried to petition for as a student. The team's creation obviously resonated with its core players, several of whom still reunite every Thanksgiving for a game.

Jordan's academic pursuits continued to link back to his alma mater. As an undergraduate, he worked with Doug London as part of an internship between CU and the Alexander Dawson School. As a Ph.D. student, Jordan enjoyed a coveted opportunity to write notes for Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (2006 edition), a book he considered to be the culmination of his English experience at Bullis. Jordan graduated from the University of Maryland College Park with a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction/English education in 2008.



*From far left, Jordan's senior yearbook portrait; Heather and Jordan at a wedding in Breckenridge, Colorado about three years ago; Schugar family from left, Heather, Owen, 3, Milo, 1, and Jordan this past fall at Peddler's Village near New Hope, PA, in the gazebo where the couple married in August 2008.*

Today, Jordan is an English instructor at West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and is channeling his appreciation for technology in education through research with digital literacies; specifically, electronic reading comprehension and the impact digital texts and tablet computers, like iPad devices, Kindles, and Nooks have on students' learning. "These devices are clearly changing how we're teaching our students to read and learn," he explains.

Jordan's merged passions of engineering, technology, literature, teaching and just enjoying time outside may have started with a senior class project he helped lead at Bullis while class vice president; helping to build the playground that still stands today in front of South Hall. "I even remember the parts I worked on. In fact, if you look around the sandbox, you'll see that in a few sections it's not quite flush. I think I'm partially responsible for that!"

For Jordan it's easy to describe what he gained from his years at Bullis. Jordan is most appreciative of what he calls the "socially-created experience" at Bullis. "It's the essence of learning at Bullis, where teachers and friends and the staff all come together to help each student find a path to success."

When Jordan is not teaching, researching, or writing he enjoys time at home with his family. Jordan met his wife Heather when they were both doctoral students at the University of Maryland, and together they are the proud parents of their two sons, Owen, 3, and Milo, 1. Although the Schugar family is enjoying their life in West Chester, Bullis will always have a special place in Jordan's heart. "I know that I wouldn't be the person I am today without those six years as a student, and three years as a teacher and coach at Bullis."

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—Jordan Schugar