



## BASIS PRESCOTT PRESCOTT, AZ

Mr. Miles Hansen



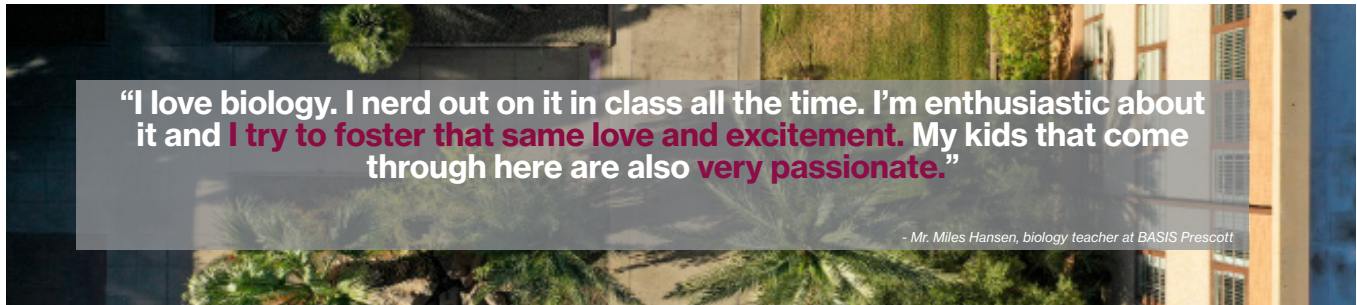
### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hansen runs a busy afternoon schedule. He provides a one-hour open session where all students can ask questions, get additional help or simply catch up. After that, he balances time between other roles he has at the school. He used to be the athletics director for BASIS, where he supported athletics programs and sports teams. Between cheering at sporting events, enjoying band performances and coaching varsity volleyball, Mr. Hansen also makes time to run his own club: clown college. At clown college, he teaches students how to juggle, ride a unicycle and perform slackline. Clown college allows Mr. Hansen to share his talents with students and help them learn fun things outside of academics. Mr. Hansen cares a great deal about fostering strong student-teacher relationships, and a large part of that happens out-of-classroom in extracurricular spaces. According to Mr. Hansen, being involved in supporting students extends beyond the classroom.

### TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Mr. Miles Hansen is a biology teacher at BASIS Prescott. The courses he teaches include eighth grade and high school biology, Honors Biology, AP Biology and AP Environmental Science. He fell in love with biology as a middle and high school student and, after trying different things in the field, settled into a role as a teacher. To his students, he always wants to impress upon them the importance of critical thinking over memorization. Mr. Hansen's teaching philosophy is that biology is all around us so to understand the world around us, we need to understand biology.

Despite being a biology teacher, Mr. Hansen's favorite course to teach is his AP Environmental Science class. He feels that his students thoroughly engage with the material and that they care a lot about the topics covered in the class. Combining his students' enthusiasm with its relevance to the current world, Mr. Hansen tries to turn that engagement into informed action within this course.



**"I love biology. I nerd out on it in class all the time. I'm enthusiastic about it and I try to foster that same love and excitement. My kids that come through here are also very passionate."**

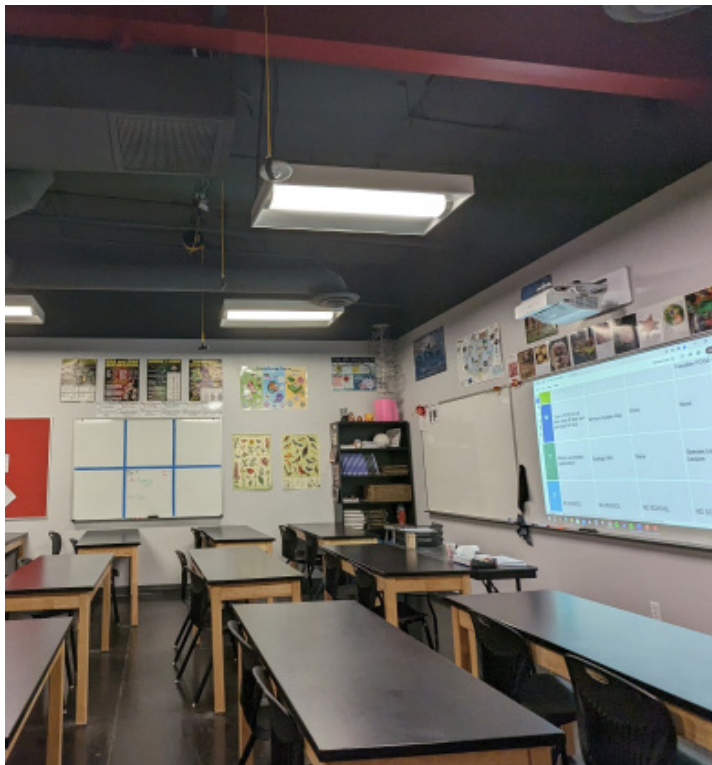
*- Mr. Miles Hansen, biology teacher at BASIS Prescott*

### INTERACTIVE LECTURING

One of the hallmarks of Mr. Hansen's classroom is interactive lecturing. Over the years of his teaching experience, he has developed his own personal style of teaching that he believes helps connect with his students. Due to small class sizes, he can engage every single student in the class with his conversational lecturing style. Mr. Hansen spends a lot of time in front of class lecturing but never for a long period of time. Instead, his lectures are broken up by questions Mr. Hansen asks students or questions students ask in return. He says this two-way interaction, with both sides asking questions and both sides providing answers, is the foundation of his personal lecturing style. To him, student questions break the flow of his lectures and provide a basis for how his students create their own connections to the material. When students ask questions and dig deeper into the material, Mr. Hansen knows they are thinking about and trying to understand the content, not just memorizing.

Asking students questions within his lecture allows them to engage with the content and ask for help from fellow classmates when they find concepts and problems unclear. In this way, Mr. Hansen can evaluate what ideas might be more difficult for students to understand and which may require additional explanation. Alternatively, Mr. Hansen finds this method shows when students are more confident with certain topics, and he can use this knowledge to relate known concepts to unfamiliar topics.

In his experience, Mr. Hansen understands that this method works well to teach and engage students, but sometimes students need hands-on experience to solidify the learning. With this in mind, Mr. Hansen divides up his curriculum with labs and other in-class activities so that everyone can learn from a diversity of high-quality experiential practices.



### ONE TEACHER, MANY COURSES

As a college preparatory school, BASIS Prescott places its emphasis on student success and achievement at the highest level. Mr. Hansen sees his teaching as an opportunity and challenge for students to rise to excellence. His goal is to prepare his students to excel in college and beyond and keeps in mind this intention to inform his instruction and pedagogical practices. He believes that his student success is proportional to their effort yet acknowledges that learning complex material at a faster rate can be a difficult task. Within his classroom, Mr. Hansen creates an atmosphere of concentration and collaboration to ensure his students receive the support they need while also keeping up with the pace and going beyond their understanding.

Small class sizes contribute to his ability to support students. Mr. Hansen recalls that his class size fluctuates depending on the electives students want to take year to year. This year's Advanced Biology classes have very few students which allows him to spend more one-on-one time supporting each student's specific needs.

Additionally, being a part of a small faculty of teachers, Mr. Hansen sees many students from one year to the next. As students progress from regular courses into Honors and AP, and similarly as they progressive from biology or chemistry into environmental science, Mr. Hansen gets to know his students personally throughout their high school career. This helps him cater content and assess his students' learning and retention over a longer period. He uses his observations from year to year to inform curriculum and teaching strategies for future sections in order to improve retention and understanding of concepts that students often struggle with in higher levels of content.

**“They can look up the facts and recite information. But if you don’t know how to apply it, then it really isn’t serving you. **Comprehension and critical thinking are vitally important.**”**

*- Mr. Miles Hansen, biology teacher at BASIS Prescott*

### HOLISTIC APPROACH

While Mr. Hansen is against rote memorization as a primary learning technique, he recognizes its place in science and its importance for certain subjects and topics within his classes. He always makes sure to balance this memorization with application, understanding that applying knowledge is just as important as – if not more than – reciting the material.

Knowing the facts and comprehending what they mean is something that labs can help distinguish. Lab work, especially in concentrated groups, helps Mr. Hanson identify what materials and concepts students struggling with, giving him a prime opportunity to work with his class and address those issues. The hands-on component of lab work is also something that Mr. Hansen enjoys exploring with his students to see how they react to potential problems and how they cooperate to solve those problems.

Labs are primarily a time for independent work, so Mr. Hansen intentionally removes himself from the process, unlike his interactive lecturing method. Labs allow for hands-off observation, and Mr. Hansen provides guidance only when prompted. Labs are uniquely interactive, allowing students to create connections to the content in a manner like college and research lab experiences.

Balancing labs, lectures, questions and discussions is not easy work, but Mr. Hansen has developed his teaching style for the last ten years. The result of Mr. Hansen's teaching is impressive and accounts for much of the success among BASIS Prescott graduates who go onto biology at the college level. 🎯