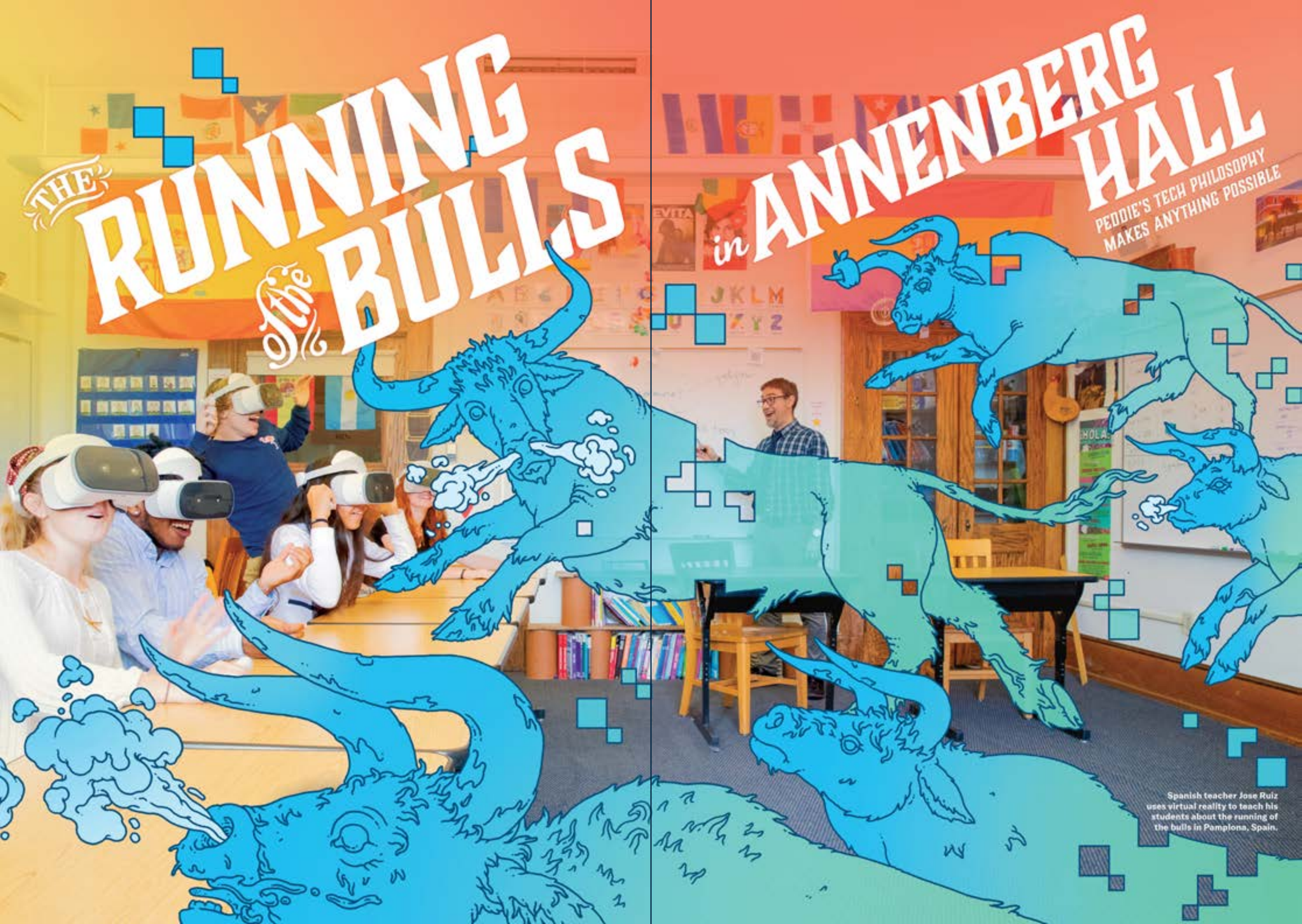


THE RUNNING BULLS

in ANNENBERG HALL

PEDDIE'S TECH PHILOSOPHY
MAKES ANYTHING POSSIBLE



Spanish teacher Jose Ruiz uses virtual reality to teach his students about the running of the bulls in Pamplona, Spain.

Language department chair Jose Ruiz teaches more than language; he's committed to sparking students' curiosity about life and culture outside of their native countries.

"Giving students insight into the life and people of another country creates a context for the practice of grammar and vocabulary and translates to a much stronger sense of purpose and connection," explained Ruiz.

That's why, when approached by Emily Jee, director of academic technology, about the idea of using Virtual Reality (VR) glasses in the classroom, Ruiz leaped at the opportunity. With Jee's support, he dove headfirst into researching available applications.

Soon, his students were at the running of the bulls in Pamplona, Spain and visiting the historic sanctuary of Machu Picchu in Peru.

"Experiencing these places through VR makes learning the language more fun," said Toby Bickford '20. "It's helped me develop a better understanding of Spanish and become more confident speaking it."

CREATIVE PEDAGOGY

At Peddie, innovation is encouraged. With support from Associate Head of School Catherine Rodrigue, faculty have the resources to generate impactful ways to challenge, inspire and support students. It's a culture that attracts exceptional faculty to the school and emboldens them to experiment and innovate once they get here.

Jee's role in itself illustrates Peddie's commitment to intentional innovation. A member of the technology department who reports as a faculty member to Rodrigue, Jee serves as tech support to faculty but also attends department and curriculum planning meetings. There she gains a sense of what is happening in the classroom so that she can bring new ideas, tools and solutions to teachers' attention.

"Peddie benefits from a terrific technology department that supports teacher initiatives," said Rodrigue.

"But we don't lead with the technology; rather, we lead with the pedagogy."

TECH INTEGRATION

Last year, English and humanities teacher Grant Edwards offered a new elective course called "Navigating the 'Influencing Machine' - Truth, Power and Trust in the Media." Executing the class was tricky; the course materials centered around current events and required that students engage with a topic or issue on social media. Looking for the best way to facilitate this, Edwards turned to Jee.

"Emily helped map out the progression in the course from one topic to the next," said Edwards. "We talked at length and workshopped plans for the course. Her insights and ideas were invaluable."

"Faculty here feel emboldened to try new things," explained Jee. "It's great modeling for our students. They'll try something, and if there are hiccups, they adapt. It teaches the kids flexibility, which is essential to any learning experience."

Jee regularly visits classrooms to see what is happening and encourages faculty to ask questions and present their challenges and ideas. Sometimes, a teacher will come to Jee, as Edwards did, with a specific need. Other times Jee will hear a conversation in a department or curriculum meeting and suggest a product or tool that might help.



Emily Jee, Peddie's director of academic technology, discusses tech integration with history department faculty.

"WE DON'T LEAD WITH THE TECHNOLOGY; RATHER, WE LEAD WITH THE PEDAGOGY."

"That's where I learn about many of the curricular thrusts that departments are embarking upon or snafus that folks are attempting to unravel," said Jee. "Often I can offer tech solutions or suggestions; sometimes to make current practices easier, other times to bring a new tool to a teacher, course or department's pedagogical arsenal."

CROSS-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

Word tends to spread quickly when one teacher finds success with a particular technology, and teachers in other departments are eager to jump on board. Such was the case with Microsoft OneNote, a digital note-taking app that encourages multi-user collaboration. Math department teachers collaborating on the curriculum for their Math Problem Solving course found OneNote to be the perfect tool.

With OneNote, teachers develop a Class Notebook and share it with their students. The application supports images, graphs, drawings, video and audio. Teachers assign homework through the Class Notebook; students complete their assignments and collaborate on their work in real time while teachers easily get a sense of how students are grasping the material.

Peddie's commitment to digital equity goes far beyond the one-to-one laptop program. All students and faculty have access to the same high-quality hardware and software, allowing them to take full advantage of the capabilities of an application like OneNote.

"OneNote spread like wildfire among both students and teachers," said Jee. "Students asked their teachers to use it and even created Class Notebooks

for group work. Many teachers now use it with their teaching teams. It's so easily shareable."

Jee noted other examples of cross-institutional collaboration. "Our teachers have used data-visualization software for the history curriculum," she said. "They've created artistic representations of polynomials utilizing particular software in math and then created digital artwork with the product of that equation."

"This speaks to the dissolution of siloed academic departments at Peddie," explained Jee. "When teachers from different departments share ideas and adapt different technologies for use across disciplines, it's bound to create a richer learning experience for our students," she said. 