



Carolyn Smith

# Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Carolyn Smith

Position: 1st Grade teacher

SCHOOL: Sharpstein Elementary

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 10 years

Q. How did your students celebrate Classified Employees Week?

A. We completed a writing assignment tied to our school's classified employees. We wrote thank you notes to honor their service. It helped them be aware of how much these people do for us every day. Without classified staff our schools would not be the same. Students talked about how they treat them with kindness.

Q. What skills do you want your students to develop by the end of the year?

A. I would like students writing stories with good beginnings and endings. In math, they should be able to memorize math facts up to 10. I use strategies so students understand the math concepts and the number system. In reading, I want students to be at grade level or above so they are fluent with the concepts at this level.

Q. How has your teaching changed since working in the dual language program?

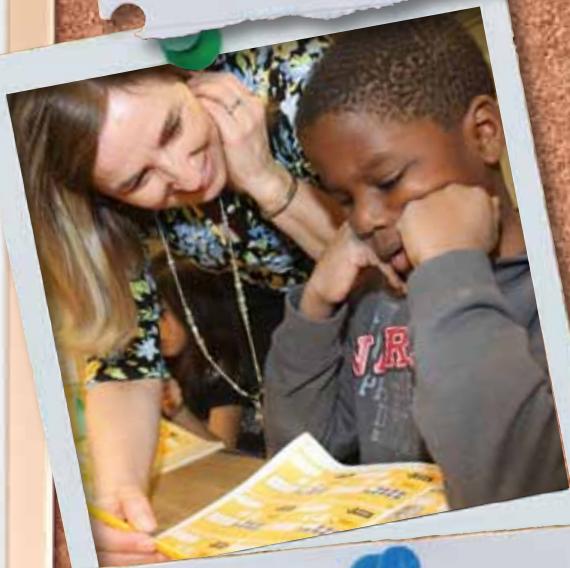
A. The first year I worked with dual language I was frustrated. I didn't know how to work with children who spoke a different language than mine. Gradually, I gleaned more strategies by going to workshops and talking with other educators. I went to a GLAD workshop and learned many new methods for working with second-language learners. In math we sing songs and do many hands-on activities. We use pictures and other strategies that enrich the classroom.

Q. What is it like having a teaching partner in the dual language program?

A. It's like having two parents in one family. Each teacher has different strengths and weaknesses. The partner teacher is someone you trust. We share ideas and collaborate. It has been wonderful working with Ms. Pedroza. She has insights about some of the children which I had not considered. She also has new and proven ideas about how to approach students academically.

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## MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM CAROLYN'S CLASS:



**COMMENTS FROM CAROLYN...**  
Every September we gather vegetables from our school garden and make salsa. We have parents from both English and Spanish speaking families participate. It brings together both cultures in an activity that everyone enjoys.



I love to see the children's faces light up when they understand something for the first time.



We teach difficult concepts and expect a lot from our students. By the end of the school year, we see tremendous growth. It's a teacher's dream come true to work with children and see them learn.