



John Buissink

Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: John Buissink

SCHOOL: Garrison Middle School

Position: Math teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 31 years

Q. What are your 7th grade math students working on?

A. We are working on percents and proportions right now. The percent of change and difference. This can be quite a difficult concept for many 7th graders.

Q. What strategies do you use to help students understand these difficult concepts?

A. I try to use real world examples. I have to find topics students can relate to. Even using a car buying example can be difficult because students probably have not visited a showroom to see the price of a new car. It can still be out in the realm of -- I don't understand. By using candy bars or things students actually purchase, they can better relate with the the math.

Q. Why do you use story problems?

A. For one, it's a requirement on the Measurement of Student Progress state exams to convert a story problem into a number problem. Story problems also provide actual examples so students can better understand the concept and solve the problem.

Q. What skills will these students need before advancing to 8th grade?

A. Apart from learning the required math curriculum, they need to learn the study skills necessary to prepare them for the 8th grade. They need to learn how to learn math. For example, they need to be organized and learn how access the materials they need to be successful. They need to know how to take notes, use a calculator and how to manage their time.

Q. What are some challenges you face in the classroom?

A. In the 7th grade, students have vast differences in abilities. Often the holes they have in understanding the math are hidden. I work individually with the students to discover the holes and provide support. I do this over and over again.

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MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM
JOHN'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM JOHN...

Teaching is like being in the theater and having a play that changes every night. It's always the first night and you never know whether the audience is going to be with you or against you. You have a surge of adrenaline every day to do your best.

I love teaching because I get to do something different every minute of every day. I never know what I am going to face. There is no script.



I'm motivated to help each student do their best.

I want them to be successful. The best gift a teacher can receive is when their students learn and do well.