

# Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Brad Hobbs

SCHOOL: Green Park Elementary

Position: 3rd Grade Teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 10 years

Q. How have you used technology to help your students learn?

A. I create a PowerPoint to help tell the story we are working on for the week. I use videos and pictures and make it fun. The students get excited to talk about the story. They enjoy this activity the most. Reading is so important and we need to find ways to help students build on their skills.

Q. Why is it important to gradually introduce English to native Spanish speakers?

A. If they were fully immersed in English, their focus would be on learning the language. Many of the foundational building blocks associated with the content would be lost. I have found if students learn to read in their native language it makes the transition to English more effective.

We don't want them to fall behind on academic skills just because they are learning a new language. Language development comes over time.

Q. How much time does it take to learn a new language?

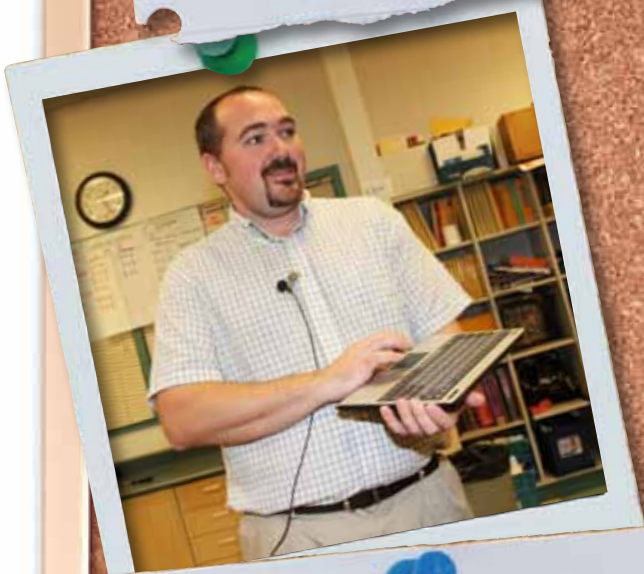
A. I have been learning Spanish for 17 years and it can still be challenging. Research tells us it takes five to seven years to acquire new language skills. Many of our students can master conversational language, but it is the development of academic language skills that takes longer. We need to be patient with our students and support them as they acquire these new skills.

Q. How does team teaching with your wife work?

A. She teaches the class in the morning and then I have them in the afternoon. She is an amazing teacher so I often find myself learning from her. It is a great arrangement. We know each other so well and it helps us communicate about what the students need and how we can best support them.

Over

MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM  
BRAD HOBBS' CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM BRAD...

Last year was the first graduating class since I have been a teacher here. One of my former students received a scholarship to Whitman College. I was so proud of him. It motivates me to keep doing my best.

My brother teaches at Blue Ridge so I have another great resource in our district. We often talk about what works for us and how to improve.



We will need to continue recruiting and supporting bilingual teachers. It is difficult to find these teachers since they are in high demand. Once we find them we need to help them be successful.