



Susan Bauer

Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Susan Bauer

SCHOOL: Garrison Middle School

Position: Language Arts

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 20 years

Q. What are students in your 6th grade writing class working on?

A. We are working on persuasive writing. Everybody has to persuade somebody something. If they can do it in writing, all the better! Letters to the editor, grants and all kinds of jobs require you to convince someone your way of thinking.

Q. How do you help students learn these writing skills?

A. I learned early on in my career, it comes down to three areas: fluency, clarity and correctness. New writers just need to write a lot. This is fluency. Then they move on to the next stage which is clarity. Did the writing make sense? The final step is correctness. This includes spelling and punctuation. Our kids at every stage are still developing their writing skills.

Q. Why is it important to develop strong writing skills in middle school?

A. Students will use writing in all their subjects in high school. I believe this is the last chance they can be taught the skills of writing. They will be taught a few more skills in high school, but teachers are expecting them to come with the basic skills.

I see my job as bridging from elementary to the high school by teaching students these writing skills. We always hear of college professors lamenting how students can't write and then sending them to remedial classes. Kids should not have to do this. Middle school is where they are getting the discrete and wholistic skills needed to put it all together. Then it's just a matter of perfecting these skills.

Q. What advice do you have for parents who are helping their child with writing?

A. Don't look at their spelling and handwriting. This is only a small portion of writing. Look for their ideas and thoughts. Help them go deeper with their ideas which we refer to as elaboration. If I can see the ideas, I can correct the spelling and handwriting. It's the ideas I'm looking for in their writing.

Over

MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM
SUSAN BAUER'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM SUSAN...

My 7th grade students will be required to meet the persuasive writing standard on next month's Measurement of Student Progress state assessment. We look at how elements of persuasive writing differ from expository writing.

Even though we live in a digital age, communicating your thoughts and ideas still comes down to good writing.



Content area teachers don't always have the time to teach the skills of writing. They need students to come with these skills so they are able to write their understanding of the concepts and standards.