



Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Dan Calzaretta

SCHOOL: Pioneer Middle School

Position: Explorer teacher (gifted program) YEARS IN DISTRICT: 2 years

Q. What is the project your students are working on in conjunction with C-SPAN?

A. This is a contest C-SPAN has every year, but this is the first year we have been involved. The students are making their own video documentaries which run between five and eight minutes long. They are based on one of two themes: a strength of our country or a challenge we face.

Q. What are some of the topics your students have selected?

A. We have kids covering everything from education to the war in Iraq to animal abuse issues to deforestation. I'm very impressed with the diverse group of documentaries the students are working on.

Q. Has this project challenged your students?

A. We are on a really steep learning curve, but the students are very resourceful and are doing a great job. Most of them have completed their interviews and are getting into their video production. They have to write narrations, edit, figure out the transitions they want and then put together a final product.

Q. How does working in groups on this project enrich their experiences?

A. It was difficult for them to settle on a topic to research. It was interesting to witness all the negotiations taking place. It's easy when you are working on a project by yourself, but when you are on a team it creates more challenges. It's neat to witness students come to a consensus and move forward.

Q. What are some of the skills they are learning with this project?

A. They are learning skills they will use beyond this classroom. A lot of teenagers have difficulty picking up the phone and calling to set up an interview. Something as simple as that can be difficult. They are learning how to organize their thoughts, research, work together and advance their technology skills.

Over

MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM
CALZARETTA'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM DAN...

This generation is already very tech savvy, but now they are able to take all their skills and put them together to create a final product like a video documentary. We have found people are ready to help these students if they only ask.

Everything must be uploaded to C-SPAN by Jan. 10. We are planning a grand premiere with Garrison Explorer students to show the documentaries.



The needs of these students are served because the district believes in gifted learning programs and has put the resources in to support it.