

Summer 1989

A Handbook for Orientation of First Year Teachers in the Walla Walla School District

Robert C. Maib

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A HANDBOOK FOR ORIENTATION OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS
IN THE WALLA WALLA SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Project
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Education

by
Robert C. Maib
July, 1989

A HANDBOOK FOR ORIENTATION OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS
IN WALLA WALLA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The transition from student teacher to becoming a professional teacher can be a very trying experience. Research, interviews and studies were done to point out problems beginning teachers have in their first year of employment. Due to these problems, beginning teachers need to know where to go for help. Administrators, secretarial services and custodial services can be very beneficial to aid the beginning teacher in the first year of employment. The aim of this project is to create a handbook for beginning teachers in the Walla Walla School District with the research discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

The shock of walking into a new building amongst new personnel for a beginning teacher is not new. The questions of where to start and what to do in preparation for the students are very difficult ones. While the beginning teacher has the skills and the knowledge to do the job, the anxiety created by the real world of school is sometimes very difficult to overcome. A new teacher must learn to become a teacher, organizer, maintenance person, counselor, designer, bill collector, disciplinarian, purchasing agent, and often mother or father figure to his/her students.

A way to minimize this shock is to provide a written guide for the beginning school teacher. It is the purpose of this paper to produce such a guide which will aid beginning teachers in feeling more secure about taking their first job in teaching. This paper will provide a list of resource people who can be very helpful with finding information about how the school is run. It will also show teachers where they may be able to get needed help in their first year of teaching.

Hypothesis

This paper will attempt to show how and with whom it is imperative to work with so that a program will best be suited to fulfill teacher and student needs. This, in turn, will assist first year teachers to be effective with their designated programs.

Limitations

This study is limited to beginning teachers in the public schools of Walla Walla. It does not deal with what may happen in the years to follow. Building a good starting base for the first year teacher will strengthen the following years in the profession. This study has been constructed with the thought that this takes place in Walla Walla, Washington, but may be used in other school districts or geographic areas.

Introduction

Research has been conducted and formulated in this study to better assist teachers entering the teaching profession. This project will provide information that will lead to a successful program. Information will include experimental studies, article reviews and information from instructors at both the college and public school levels. The culmination of this project will be a handbook for orientation of first year teachers in the Walla Walla School District.

Review of Literature

The purpose of the study, to provide first year teachers with a guide for being successful, has been a concern of interested teachers for years. However, there have been very few, if any, studies in this area. The majority of the literature available deals with developing student learning objectives. Although a student learning objective guide is helpful when one undertakes a teaching job, it is not the focus of attention in this study.

A search of current literature through Dialog Information Service, in the Central Washington University Library, yielded only five journal articles that dealt with the problem of developing handbooks for first year teachers.

The article written in the NASSP Bulletin, "Teacher Orientation, What Principals Should Stress," by Hetlinger, outlines areas for principals to cover while developing new teacher orientation programs. The article infers that regardless of the new teachers qualifications or potential for success, the principal's failure to properly introduce him/her to the school and the job can easily turn high ambitions into lost dreams. Job orientation for the new teacher should stress personal relationships with the principal, department heads, colleagues and support personnel.

"The First Summer-Critical for Vo-Ag Teachers," by Vaughn and Vaughn, describes how a first year handbook was

developed to aid beginning vocational agriculture teachers in New Mexico. The handbook describes what the instructor must do to get ready for their agriculture program in their own facility. It stresses the importance of getting the equipment in good working order, making sure that what was ordered the previous year has been inventoried and is ready to be used in the classroom. They stress that the instructor must make sure that the students have been contacted for the pre-school shows. The handbook was designed to assist a new teacher in a shop and vocational agricultural program instead of a formal classroom. The handbook is a useful tool that is being used in New Mexico schools.

A Checklist to Guide Your Actions, by Check, discusses a questionnaire that was given to 241 educational psychology students. The questionnaire centered around six areas of interest that would relate to accepting a job. These areas were the community, school, administration, salaries and fringe benefits, teaching and miscellaneous. It was written so that the promising teacher could have a guide to help them make more desirable and prudent decisions about their first employment. The checklist included 45 questions that the beginning teacher should ask as they were looking for a first job. The purpose of the questionnaire was to give the students an outlook of the impending conditions and situations that will face them as they enter the teaching force.

Booked for Teaching, by Bottum, began as a review of literature but resulted in a journal article on three published books intended to help both new and experience college teachers with their teaching methods and skills. The first book, The Art and Craft of Teaching, by Gullette, includes chapters and essays on teaching methods, the first day of class, being a section leader, teaching throughout a semester and grading. The second book, A Practical Handbook for College Teachers, by Fuhrman and Grasha, is a well organized, thorough book which explores college teaching from every aspect. It includes tests for self analysis and discusses a variety of non-traditional subjects such as behavioral humanistic and cognitive perspectives on teaching, the role of personal values in influencing teaching, and the matching of learning and teaching styles. The last book, On Teaching and Learning in College, by Dressel and Marcus, examines the overemphasis in undergraduate school on having students master a discipline rather than having them learn how to learn. The authors discuss ways of helping students develop a learning framework which allows them to become lifelong learners without being dependent on formal education for that learning. These five books all expressed valid concerns but were all written to help a college professor with a completely different set of expectations.

An article, "Investigation Into the Initial Problems of New Lecturers," by Tiernan and Kuhl, identified major

problems in the pre-employment and early employment stages of new full-time lecturers in South Australia. It describes using 12 new and 12 established lecturers. Teachers participated in a seminar to identify beginning teachers' problems. Findings included:

1. Many new lecturers felt inadequately informed by interviewing panels regarding the effect of salary bars and thus their standing within the salary scale structure.

2. Most new lecturers expressed surprise that they were not asked to visit the central office within the first five days of commencing duty.

3. Quality of teaching was placed at the top of the lecturing priorities lists, and

4. All lecturers felt that staff without teaching experience should have adequate supervision.

All points brought up in this report are concerns that are still expressed 13 years later. Lack of communication in the interview, starting salary, potential visits from your principal, observations and lack of information about resource personnel available in the school during the first year of employment.

Upon the completion of the Dialnet Search it was found there was not enough published works to give beginning teachers a guide to help them through the first year of their job.

The Florida Coalition for the Development of a Performance Measurement System Office of Teacher Education,

Certification and Inservice Staff Development, Tallahassee, Florida, developed, A Handbook for the Florida Beginning Teacher. The handbook was designed to provide a beginning teacher with information about the Florida beginning teacher program. The program provides a teacher with supportive staff and a peer teacher. This staff meets with the new teacher throughout the year to give support and critique the job that has been performed by the teacher. Throughout the year the teacher must demonstrate essential generic competencies which are expected by the peer group and a set guideline that is followed.

The generic competencies are a list of 24 goals that a new teacher must achieve. They range from having to identify long-range goals for a given subject area, to being able to identify causes of classroom misbehavior and employ a technique for correcting it. A new teacher must show the ability to read, comprehend and interpret, orally and in writing. The competencies appear to be like a post-teacher education test. They have to pass this test to be able to keep their job at the Florida Public Schools.

This program is comparable with the Mentor Program that is used in many schools within the State of Washington. Some schools assign an experienced teacher to guide a beginning teacher through their first year. They help them with problems that occur in the classroom, around the school and with anything that would pertain to their teaching.

At the time of this writing the State of Washington does not require a teacher to go through a mentor program such as that described above.

Information and Related Material, Supportive Staff

In 1989, Walla Walla School District #140 made available the job descriptions of the support staff. This was done upon request as it is available for the general public. These descriptions included descriptions of the responsibilities of the building secretary, head custodian, librarian, maintenance department and instructional aid.

Upon scrutinizing the job descriptions, one notes that there are adequate human resources available at each building to assist the beginning teacher. The supportive staff can assist the beginning teacher in finding solutions to problems that arise daily. For example, a school secretary has the necessary forms to order supplies that are required to effectively run a classroom. A building custodian can assist in the daily up-keep of the room. The support staff is available. The beginning teacher needs to have a guide to utilize this support.

Procedures

The purpose of this study was to develop a guide for beginning teachers in the Walla Walla Washington School District.

This study employed the descriptive, self-report research procedure. An interview was given to the

principals, head school secretary, head school custodian, librarian and the head of the maintenance department for the Walla Walla School District. The major focus of my interview was two-fold:

1. What major problem do you encounter with a new teacher?

2. What information do you make available for the beginning teacher which will be of assistance to them?

The information gathered in this interview dealt with the job descriptions of the supportive staff. What are their duties as it would pertain to the first year teacher? This would answer questions that one would have beginning a new job in the Walla Walla School District. For example, where to go for that needed help when you have not been given the information through your previous educational background.

The guide will also include a listing of locations where information can be obtained. The beginning teacher has a base or background achieved through his/her college education. More information is essential upon receiving a teaching job which will assist the beginning teacher. The last section of the guide will formulate suggestions for advanced training. Potential workshops, seminars and post-graduate courses available for a teacher to explore which will help them do better in the following years.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definition of terms was utilized:

New Teacher. A teacher that has just accepted their first teaching job. A teacher that has not taught in a classroom except for student teaching.

Supportive Staff. Those people that are hired in a district that are able to support the teaching process.

Beginning Teacher. A teacher that is just beginning to teach school.

Mentor Teaching Program. When a beginning teacher is nominated by a building principal or supervisor, they will be assigned to a teacher who works in the same field. This teacher is a resource pool for the beginning teacher to gain advise and help throughout the year.

CHAPTER 2

Results of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better prepare new teachers entering into the teaching profession. The project provides information leading to a successful program of teacher orientation. Information including experimental studies and human resources will show ways that beginning teachers will be able to complete their first year of teaching with success in the Walla Walla School District.

In the review of the literature, it was found that there were many ways to receive helpful information to make the teaching job easier. These findings, however, are not a substitute for good job experience.

First, a new teacher must acquire a proper education. While an education is being obtained the prospective teacher must acquire good interpersonal skills. It is important to function effectively around those people that one will be working with. When another person speaks, is the new teacher listening? When suggestions are given, can the new teacher take them in such a way to build his strengths in the classroom. When questioned, is the new teacher defiant or is he/she able to answer you knowledgeably.

While time has been spent taking college courses it can not be taken for granted that knowledge has been obtained as to how different techniques are followed in a classroom. With the diversity of teaching techniques a beginning teacher must keep up with new pedagogy that is being introduced. When one gets a chance to work with a new idea, that time must be used to build a knowledge base. College and university course work is one means of learning, take what is offered that relates to your field and build a background that will make teaching easier, and more understanding to you.

When one has accepted the job, the school district will make available a handbook that will describe teacher regulations as it pertains to the laws of the State of Washington. These laws will help show you what you need to do to avoid liability. One must know what can and can not be done while one is a teacher. You will now be perceived as a professional. You now become the teacher not the student. Know the regulations and laws. Know how your school district will react to different situations that may arise. Make sure you know what the district expects of you.

Walla Walla School District is represented by the National Education Association, and it's state affiliation, Washington Education Association; and local affiliation, Walla Walla Valley Education Association. These associations are set up for teachers in the district. If at any time you need their assistance don't hesitate to use

their services. Although these services meet the needs of many, the handbook referred to in this paper does not take the place of the unions that were mentioned, but rather supplements them. Administrators who are in the building that one is working in will be able to direct you to the proper representatives.

All certificated employees new to the district shall be provided a copy of the agreement by the district upon issuance of their individual contract and such agreement shall be available for review to all applicants for certificated employee positions.

The beginning teacher must be able to work with the administrators and other teachers. Find out what the administration team is like in your building. Your program is going to be the most important project to you. In order to make that program work you must find out what parameters you have to work within. Find out what has been done in the past, what worked, what did not work, ask questions.

The students are a very important facet of the total educational process. Find out what the administrator believes is best for the students. All administrators are there to help students, but each one differs on their beliefs, and the process that a teacher should use to create a good atmosphere. Administrators can bring tools and materials into your program if they are approached in the correct manner. Ask them what they think before they tell you what they think.

One must have the ability to understand the students' capabilities. One must know what has been taught to the students and how it was taught. If this information is not available to the instructor, he must devise a simple test so that a starting point may be determined. It does no good to the program if the instructor is going to teach over the heads of the students. All students need to have basics before they can be taught the extra skills to compete in an ever changing society.

All schools use some form of evaluation, don't be hesitant to ask ahead of time what they are looking for. All activities of a school district should ultimately be directed forward providing a more effective education for the students. This program for evaluating teachers, consequently, is for the improvement of instruction. Since there is always room for improvement by updating skills, the periodic evaluation of all personnel is a vehicle designed as a diagnostic tool for identifying what kind of improvements and updating would best strengthen a given individual's performance. The emphasis should be upon analysis rather than appraisal with particular attention being paid to the teaching act itself. Many teachers are leery of evaluations, which are a useful tool that can be used to one's advantage.

A new teacher should keep in contact with the principal. If within five days of the start of the school one has not had the principal in their room one should make

an appointment with the principal to let them know what one is doing. If the new teacher has questions about anything, ask the principal, that is part of their job. The principal is there to serve a beginning teacher as well as to serve the students. Some of the responsibilities listed for principals include: supervision, evaluation and employment of personnel, general leadership in serving as the focal point for the development of goals, expectations, program and advocacy and leadership in the development of building policies. The stated responsibilities are a means of help to one as a beginning teacher. The requirements of the principal can be used as a means of supportive resources to the beginning teacher.

Another form of evaluation that is helpful to a teacher is the monitoring of lesson plans. Adequate lesson plans are necessary if quality teaching is to take place. Formal lesson plans are required for first year teachers in the Walla Walla schools. Keep notes of what one does, note what was successful in the lesson and what was not. If one were to look back through the years one would find that lesson plans change as technology changes. Keeping good records are an important part of the learning process.

The Interview

Upon seeing the difficulty a new teacher has for the first year, it was decided that the writer would find a means of helping the beginning teacher in Walla Walla. The author

approached different personnel in the school district to see where help could be given to new teachers. Through this search it was determined that it would be advantageous to interview key support staff at the Walla Walla Public Schools. The support staff has been hired because of the teachers. The state allows each school to have one support staff member for every three certificated staff members. The support staff include the principal, secretary, custodian and other people required to make the teaching job possible. The jobs of the support staff are just as important as that of the teacher, without them, teaching would be impossible. Teachers need to work with the support staff to be able to educate the leaders of tomorrow.

The two questions were asked of the support staff, what major problems do you encounter with a new teacher? and what information do you make available for beginning teachers which will be of assistance to them? When the author approached the principals with these questions their responses were similar. They all said that the beginning teacher needs to spend more time in the building prior to the beginning of the school year. The statement was made throughout the interview that having only one day to get all the information that is needed is not enough. The teachers' workday consists of meeting the entire staff of Walla Walla, meeting your building staff and then going to the classroom.

The next day the students arrive, so one puts off asking the questions you have to get your class ready.

Although the principals are the leaders of the building, the writer felt that other support members of the schools played an even more important role for the new teachers during their first year of teaching. Therefore, the writer asked the same questions to the support staff members.

When the questions were asked of the building secretary, head custodian and the building librarian, their responses were similar. They commented that the beginning teacher needed to ask questions. Beginning teachers assume that support staff know what they want.

After listening to the responses of those qualified to respond, the information was broken down into two areas:

1. the beginning of the school year, and
2. during the year.

Following is a composite of that information as it would pertain to the answers needed by the beginning teacher.

Beginning the Year

When the contract has been signed the beginning teacher should be ready to enter the classroom. Plan to spend a lot of time preceding the opening of school to prepare oneself for the classroom. This time used correctly will be a benefit to a new teacher for what is to take place in the first year of teaching. Once school has started one can

count on spending at least 14 hours a day trying to keep up. Time spent before the school starts can be used to let one become familiar with people involved with the education environment.

Walla Walla offers a supplemental contract day that can be used in your classroom. The supplemental contract day requests must be cleared in advance through the principal or assistant principal with a separate form completed for each day. These forms may not be submitted retroactively.

Every employee will be given a two-day separate contract which shall include the workday immediately prior to the first day of school and the workday immediately following the last day of school. Each employee will be offered four additional days in the separate contract upon mutual agreement with one's immediate supervisor. All principals stated that the supplemental day used by the beginning teachers, prior to the year starting, should be to find out what the building policies are.

Supplies are very important to make a program flow neatly. The supplies that are needed by teachers vary with each position. The industrial arts teacher is going to have more supplies to account for than a social studies teacher. Each building will provide one with the supplies that are needed for the teacher to get the classroom ready. Some supplies come from the district stockroom, but most supplies will be stored in each building, inventoried through the

building secretary, that are needed to get a classroom ready.

Make sure that somewhere in the classroom is a list of what is expected of the students as it pertains to conduct and general behavior. Let student know that they are going to be held accountable for actions instigated by them. Classroom rules are a product that one may want to have students help construct. When a student has had input into the process of decision making of rules they are more apt to buy into the program.

Prior to the start of the year, find out if there is a committee that may be beneficial to participate on. Get involved with what is going on in the school. Other options may include coaching or supervising events. Make sure that being visible to others that are working in the building becomes important. If one is not involved with activities in the school, there is a possibility of having comments indicating so on evaluations.

Two of the most important people in the building are the building secretary and the building custodian. Before school has started make sure that one finds these people, or at least, know how to get in touch with them. The secretary is going to have the proper forms for any orders that one may have. He/she will know what forms will be needed for the different days that the teacher may miss from school. When one is going to miss a day one must contact the principal as soon as possible. The secretary will have the

right forms for these and other kinds of leaves. Those listed in the negotiated agreement contract with Walla Walla are sick leave, attendance incentive leave, maternity leave, bereavement leave, emergency leave and personal leave.

Sick leave is a leave day due to the illness of the teacher or a family member that can not take care of themselves, such as a child. Attendance incentive leave is a program that enables the teacher to buy back annual sick leave and/or retirement sick leave. maternity leave would be granted to a woman having a baby, or in the process of adopting a baby. Bereavement leave is a leave granted when a teacher has lost a family member. Emergency leave is granted when a teacher needs to tend to a matter that could not be taken care of other than school hours. And finally, a personal leave day can be granted to a teacher if the teacher is willing to pay the substitute and there are substitutes available.

The secretary will be the person contacted in order for one to visit the principal. Almost all forms can be filled out and submitted to the secretary to be signed by the principal. This is just the start of the infamous paper trail that follows a teacher in the years to come. The secretary will know which form to fill out or be able to direct you to the proper source.

If there is a need to contact someone in the district that is not in your building the secretary will have this information. A building secretary will compose bulletins

and memos to staff, he/she will send out notices to the home, including typing, printing and distribution. Realizing all the services that a secretary can perform, one should not overlook this resource.

The head custodian had the same response to the interview that the secretaries had, ask questions when one does not know. A head custodian is a position that is very important to the operation of a complete school building. This person has more knowledge about what goes on in your building than anyone else as it pertains to keeping the building kept up and operating. They will know where to dispose of materials, where to get materials or equipment that is needed. If one needs something extra for a classroom they may know whom to contact to have the job done.

Don't ever think that what the custodians do is inferior to what you are doing. The job being done by the custodian makes teaching easier. Keeping the room clean, the trash taken out and the furniture repaired are essential to successful teaching. Without any of these jobs being done one doesn't have a usable classroom unless the teacher wants to perform these jobs all year.

The librarian is a person that knows what material can be used in the classroom to supplement the textbooks or lesson plans. The librarian has knowledge about curriculum, video packages and literature, that are available to help design projects.

The librarian has access to the Instructional Materials Center. This center holds the films, learning kits and supplemental material pertaining to education. The Instructional Materials Center stocks material that is used throughout the district. Many of the educational kits that are stored are too expensive for an individual building to purchase. The librarian will be able to send equipment that does not work to the materials center if it can not be repaired in a building library. The librarian will make sure that a teacher has equipment in the classroom to enable one to teach when equipment is needed. This would include televisions, records, film projectors, overhead projectors, screens, VCR's, cameras and anything else that would help the instructional process.

When a teacher is ready to go into the building, they should make sure that one gets their class list as soon as possible. This information will give the beginning teacher the student names and the class size. This will help when it comes to getting supplies ready for the opening of the classroom.

During the Year

The shock of seeing the first students come through the classroom doors is a very good feeling. They are the first real class that a first year teacher will have. There is no master teacher to stand behind the beginning teacher. The new teacher is on their own. When the students are in the

classroom the teacher should go over the rules one wants to make learning orderly and interesting. No student should be allowed to interfere with the learning process of the other students in the classroom. Again, it is good to let students help with the everyday rules that constitute the smooth operation of a class.

The most important segment of the year is the short period of time a teacher has to make a first impression on the students. The teacher needs to demonstrate to students that they are going to be fair and not going to let the students take advantage of the teacher.

Students are interested in their teacher. A teacher should let them know something about themselves to show the students they are human beings. Then the teacher might discuss some interests one has outside of the school. The teacher needs to get down to business. One must show that they have the expertise to teach effectively. It's important to be fair, but if the hammer is to fall, let it fall. A teacher must make sure that they follow through with a discipline plan that one sets up or with one that the building has produced. Teachers shouldn't be afraid of parents' reactions if they are using the same discipline plan for all the students. If a new teacher needs to have support, call on the principal. All principals want the teacher, beginning or experienced, to be able to handle their own problems. But, at times the principal will be needed, and they should be there to be of assistance.

Now that the beginning teacher has made it through the first few days there are some things that need to be organized. Be prepared, have the materials ready to go each day. If unsure make more work for the students than should be possible to get done at any one period. Having more to do is better than running out of things to do and having students with free time. The secretaries are able, if time permits, to help get papers copied or typed. Most buildings provide aids to help the educational process and could, at times, be of assistance to the teachers.

During the first part of school it is important that the teachers make themselves visible to other students and staff members. Between classes get into the halls, or go to the teachers workroom to become acquainted with other staff members. Many of the staff members that the beginning teacher will be meeting will have been working together for many years. Very seldom does a beginning teacher find a fellow staff member that does not like others, it's just that new friendships take time. Ask them for help if one needs it, they have been doing the job for many years and most can remember what it was like to work their first year. Most teachers have good information that can be passed on or will be able to point one in the right direction if other assistance is needed.

As time goes on there will be many questions, don't feel that it all has to be done by the first year teacher. The first year teacher can make a difference if all the

resources available can be utilized. Have the principal of the building visit the classroom, talk and get to know the secretary, take the students to the library, and if there is a problem with the classroom fixtures, ask the opinion of the custodian. Those people that the beginning teacher works with want the new teachers to succeed, if the new teacher needs help they must be the one that instigates the help.

Advanced Training

As the school year goes on there will be classes offered for the teacher to increase and improve teaching skills. Even though these classes are good and help teachers become better, one may have too much time involved in that first year of teaching to be able to pursue advanced educational classes.

The negotiated agreement between the Walla Walla School District and the Walla Walla Valley Education Association defines academic freedom as a learning experience that shall be guaranteed to all employees, and no special limitations shall be placed upon study, investigation, presentation and interpretation of facts and ideas concerning man, human society, the physical and biological world and other branches of learning subject to accepted standards of professional responsibility and community standards.

There are many classes to choose from. Make sure the classes one takes have been approved by the administration and will benefit the educational goals desired.

At the time of this writing a master's degree is not required to teach. If the option is a possibility, the master's program should be a viable option to the beginning teacher. The time involved is the same as obtaining a continuing certificate while the monetary value is an advantage to a teacher along with having the extra credentials. It also enables a teacher to advance not only in money but the selection of jobs that may be offered in the future.

The writer feels that going to summer school is the most efficient method by which to obtain credits quickly, without having to give up evenings, Saturdays and other professional days that are offered during the school year. It is going to be a lot of work the first few years. All years require work but at times the beginning teacher is going to believe that the first year is just a survival year. Concentrate on teaching the first year, not what classes are offered. The principal will be able to give the beginning teacher ideas about what classes would best benefit him at the schools year end. If it is left up to the teacher, one should take some classes that will enable them to see how the school is run, such as evaluation, finance, supervision and alternative ways to use instruction. Make sure the classes that are taken will fulfill any requirements that the district may have and the institution of higher learning may require for an advanced degree.

CHAPTER 3

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore ways a beginning or first year teacher could find help during the first year of teaching. The information that has been provided is a supplement that a new teacher in the Walla Walla School District may be able to use. As stated earlier, this is not a substitute for experience. The guide is intended to help while one is entering into the educational profession.

It is important that a teacher know what can be done in the classroom and to know those that are able to help him when help is needed.

Conclusion

This study is made with the thought that a beginning teacher may have a better experience during the completion of one's first year of teaching than many first year teachers have had. It is important to be able to work with others so that the job of instructing students is made easier. The right kind of people are there to help if the right kinds of questions are asked.

Recommendations

It is recommended by this writer that new or beginning teachers be given this handbook with the thought that it may be of some help to the first year of teaching. The handbook is not a remedy for problems, but may raise some questions for the beginning teacher that will help provide assistance.

It is important that new teachers know that help is available to better serve students and to make a teacher's job more efficient. There is not a substitute for good experience but there are ways to get started in the right direction.

CHAPTER 4

The Handbook

**A Handbook for Orientation of First Year Teachers
in the Walla Walla School District**

A HANDBOOK FOR ORIENTATION OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS
IN THE WALLA WALLA SCHOOL DISTRICT

WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON 99362

SCHOOLS

Administration Office, 364 S. Park	527-3000
W.W. High School, Fern and Abbott Roads Richard Neher, Principal	527-3020 529-2560
Garrison Junior High School, 906 Chase Phil Rolf, Principal	527-3040 529-1479
Pioneer Junior High School, 450 Bridge Abe Roberts, Principal	527-3050 525-6661
Berney School, Pleasant and School Dennis McQuire, Principal	527-3060 529-0448
Blue Ridge School, 1150 W. Chestnut Buddy Heimbigner, Principal	527-3066 529-5711
Edison School, 1315 E. Alder Dusty Pelzin, Principal	527-3072 525-1846
Green Park School, Isaacs and Clinton Charlene Bailey, Principal	527-3077 529-0881
Paine Child Development Center, S. 4th Jan Eyestone, Director	527-3083 525-2973
Prospect Point School, Howard and Reser	527-3088
Sharpstein School, 410 Howard Bill Thompson, Principal	527-3094 525-0200

WALLA WALLA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON

ADMINISTRATION

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Walla Walla Schools

Beginning Teaching

Welcome:

This handbook has been carefully prepared to help you become more knowledgeable as a beginning teacher in the Walla Walla Public Schools.

The purpose of this handbook was to expose ways a beginning or first year teacher could find help during the first year of teaching. The information that has been provided is an instrument that a new teacher to the Walla Walla School district may be able to use. As stated in the handbook there is not a substitute for experience, the guide is intended to help while one is entering into the educational profession.

First year teachers, who are usually idealistic in their thinking and frequently unrealistic in their expectations of teaching, become stressed and anxious when they make the transition from supervised teaching to independent teaching.

It is important a teacher know what can be done in the classroom to aid in this transition. Also, knowledge of staff members who are able to help when help is needed.

Educational Background

While time has been spent taking college courses it can not be taken for granted that knowledge has been obtained as to how different techniques are followed in a classroom. With the diversity of the different techniques a beginning teacher must keep up with the new technology that is being introduced. If a new idea comes along, give it some merit before it is passed off as worthless. Make sure that it is not just another bandstand to be jumped on.

Contract Acceptance:

All certificated employees new to the district shall be provided a copy of the negotiated agreement by the district upon issuance of their individual contract and such agreement shall be made available for review to all applicants for certificated employee positions.

Know how your school district will react to different situations that may arise. Make sure you know what the district expects of you.

Walla Walla Valley Education Association:

The deductions authorized for new employees shall be made in ten equal amounts from each new employee's paycheck beginning with the pay period in November through the pay period in August of each year.

Any teacher claiming a bona fide religious objection shall notify the association and the business office of such objection in writing within 30 days of commencement of employment. The money for dues can be donated to a charity or representative of another organization.

Administration:

The beginning teacher must be able to work with the administration and the other teachers. Find out what the administrators are like in your building. Ask your principal questions and invite him/her to your classroom. If it is not possible for them to come to your class, make an appointment with them so you can relate to them what is going on with your classroom. This will give you the opportunity to solicit ideas that the principal may have.

The students are very important. By getting to know the administrators in your building there may be ways they can help bring in new materials. This would be beneficial to your curriculum because of the supplemental material you could use.

Evaluation:

There must be some form of feedback as to how you are doing in the classroom and building. Ask ahead of time what your principals are going to be looking for in your instruction during his observations and evaluations of your performance. These observations are meant to be used as an instrument for you to become more proficient at your job, ask the principal for their ideas and accept their help. The principals want you to succeed as much as you do, because what you do is a reflection on the principals.

Lesson Plans:

All first year teachers are required to have lesson plans for the evaluation of the building principal. Use these as a learning instrument, what did not work this year may work very well with a different group of students. State in your lesson plans those plans that worked well. Use other teachers' lesson plans for ideas, teachers like to share plans that are good or that have proven to work well for them.

Supplemental Contract Days:

A supplemental contract day is offered to teachers prior to the teacher's first workday. Apply to your principal to be able to work in your classroom prior to the beginning of school. It will be advantageous for you to spend this time learning what the policy requirements are for your building.

Investigate the discipline plan of the building, look at how you are expected to record attendance and make sure that other building policies are made available to you. Obtain a class list of your students so that you will know how many to expect. It is very important that you are able to ask questions about what the principal will be expecting your performance to be.

The Support Staff of Your Building:

The support staff of the building have been hired to support the process of teaching. Without the support staff, your job would entail many more hours of work. If you do not use them

you have eliminated the possibility of enhancing the effectiveness of your teaching skills. The support staff include the principal, the building secretary, building custodian, librarian and maintenance department.

Principal and Vice Principal:

As stated earlier, the beginning teacher must find out what the administrative team is like in the building. Explore what their likes and dislikes are about education. Principals are there for the students as you are, but how they perceive goals of learning objectives may differ from one administrator to another. Make sure that you keep in constant contact with the principal. Ask the principal for advice which will enhance teaching skills. Utilize their past experience as a teacher, and their present expertise as to administrator. They may be able to direct you to a fellow teacher who does an excellent job with specific teaching skills and styles.

If for any reason you are going to miss a day of school, make sure that you contact your building principal or vice principal. Do not attempt to obtain a substitute teacher on your own. Keep the principal well informed of what you are doing.

Give the principal a professional growth plan that will enable you to attend a variety of classes and seminars to enable you to increase teaching ability.

Building Secretary:

As one continues through a teaching career one will find that an important part of your job is the assistance of the building secretary. Most buildings have more than one secretary, but the one that has the correct forms to be filled out will be the secretary of the principal. The information that the secretary has will be a tremendous help to the beginning teacher.

The secretary will have the correct forms for the supplies that are needed for your classroom. The secretary will have access to the supplies that are stored in your building and be able to inform one as to what is available through the district stockroom.

If you are working with a budget in your department the secretary will be able to issue the correct forms for ordering material. Some items ordered may come from a district budget or may be allocated through a fund issued through your building.

Sometimes throughout the year one will be required to travel to another building site. The secretary will be able to give you vouchers that are needed for you to be reimbursed for money you pay to attend. The travel vouchers must be signed by the principal, it can be obtained through the secretary. All forms for the district must be submitted in advance of the event for the principal's approval.

There are going to be days that are missed during the school year. If you need to take a day of personal leave, bereavement leave, sick leave, or an emergency leave, the secretary will be able to provide you with assistance of the paperwork that is involved.

If you need to make long distance phone calls, check out a key to get in the building, or schedule a meeting in the conference room, the secretary will be able to help.

The secretary will have forms needed for field trips, book inventory and checklists for classroom inventory.

Accidents must be reported to the secretary, or immediate supervisor, so that the right insurance forms may be submitted. All employees are covered by insurance through the district and the state workman's compensation plan.

As one may realize there are many areas that can be supported through the secretary. It is important that the beginning teacher ask questions when they arise. The secretary will be able to answer your questions or be able to direct you to the correct resource to obtain help.

Custodians:

The building custodians will be as much help to you as the beginning teacher will let them be. The custodian will be able to direct you to a location that furniture can be obtained or repaired. They will assist in the upkeep of your classroom. The custodian will remove waste, sweep floors and help arrange the furniture.

At times during school problems arise in your classroom that require the assistance of the custodian. This would include a light that doesn't work, or a desk that has been broken, or extra trash that needs to be disposed of. There are many services that the custodian may be able to provide you if you feel the need for assistance.

Being professional is an important part of a teacher's job. Approach all people you work with in a professional manner. These that you respect will respect you in return.

Work is being done all the time by the custodian. If you have a chance to help in your classroom, you will find the next time you need extra help, it will be easier to get. Let yourself get to know the custodians, they have a vast amount of knowledge about what goes on in your building that may be of assistance to you.

Librarian:

The librarian in your building has material that will supplement your lesson plans. The librarian will have video, reference material and equipment that will enable the teacher to support what is being taught to the students.

Make sure that during the first part of the year you take the students to the library. This will enable the librarian to explain how the library can be used to the students' advantage.

Librarians have access to the Instructional Materials Center. This center has material that is used throughout the entire district. This would include instructional kits that are too expensive for any one building to buy. A catalog will be issued to each instructor at the beginning of the year which lists the materials available.

Don't be hesitant to ask the librarian what they may have to help you with lessons. They will either have the material needed or be able to work with you to order supplemental materials.

District Maintenance Office:

The maintenance department is there to make sure that the classroom is efficient to provide a teacher the opportunity to teach. They would be able to provide you with counters, tables, bookcases and sometimes, paint for the room to make teaching easier. If there is a problem with any fixtures in the room you will be able to fill out a work order for the maintenance department to correct the problem.

If you know that you are going to need materials for your classroom, make sure that you allow enough time for the project to be completed. The maintenance department receive many requests throughout the district. This may mean that you will have to wait for the request to become finished.

Before you purchase or build a project, check with the maintenance to see if the item can be provided through them.

General Information:

When one has obtained their first job there are many questions about what can be done to make me a better teacher. Following is a short list of ideas that may help provide the beginning teacher some advantages to help the first year.

Discipline: Make sure you know what your building has established for a discipline plan. Make sure that you are always fair to all students. Expect great things from your students, but don't over-react if something out of the ordinary arises. Be calm when you are faced with problems in your class. The administration is

there to back you up, but don't take every little problem you have to them. The administration wants to see you handle your own problems and discipline in your classroom.

Extra-Curricular: Try to become involved with activities that are outside the classroom. There are many positions offered throughout the district that can be of interest to you and make you more beneficial to the building and district. Approach your athletic director, principal and department heads as to what is available. Some of these may include sports, drama, core teams, building representatives for curriculum development, or a committee that is being formed in your building.

Visibility: Make sure that you don't find yourself hiding in your classroom. Between classes let yourself be seen in the halls, the teachers' workroom and other places that students and peers may be able to see you. If teachers are needed to supervise events you should expose yourself to them. There will always be opportunities to help at the school's events. Take the time to involve yourself and help the programs at the same time.

Advanced Training: As you work through the first year of your teaching, make a note of those areas that you may need help in. Taking classes during the first year could be very demanding on your time. Time that could be used to make your class more organized would be lost due to extra demands of classwork. It is recommended that these

classes be taken during the first summer so that time can be devoted to your responsibilities in the school district.

As years go by there will be many classes offered in the district. Make sure that what you take the first few years will apply to an advanced degree. Read all material that is issued through the central office that pertains to what can be used for salary advancement. Some classes offered will not meet requirements that this district has for salary advancement.

Summary

The purpose of this handbook was to expose ways a beginning or first year teacher could find help during the first year of teaching. The information that has been provided is a guide that a new teacher to the Walla Walla School District may be able to use. As stated earlier, there is not a substitute for experience. The guide is intended to help while one is entering into the educational profession for the first time.

The writer feels that it is important that a teacher know what can be done in the classroom and to know those support personnel that are able to help when help is needed.

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