

# Professional Practice

*Newsletter of the WSD/WenEA Evaluation Team*

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## Evaluation Team Members

Joan Wright, Co-chair  
Assistant Superintendent  
of Human Resources  
[wright.j@mail1.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:wright.j@mail1.wsd.wednet.edu)

Mary Armstrong, Co-chair  
President,  
Wenatchee Education Assn.  
[WenEA@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:WenEA@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu)

Mike Hill  
Assistant Principal,  
Wenatchee High School  
[hill.m@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:hill.m@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu)

Bill Eagle  
WHS Math Teacher and  
WSD Instructional Coach  
[eagle.b@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:eagle.b@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu)

John Waldren  
Principal, Foothills Middle School  
[waldren.j@mail4.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:waldren.j@mail4.wsd.wednet.edu)

Kathy Jarvis  
Math Teacher, Pioneer M.S.  
[jarvis.k@mail2.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:jarvis.k@mail2.wsd.wednet.edu)

Fay Crawford  
Principal, Columbia Elementary  
[crawford.f@mail2.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:crawford.f@mail2.wsd.wednet.edu)

Mark Woolsey  
Fifth Grade Teacher  
Columbia Elementary  
[woolsey.m@mail2.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:woolsey.m@mail2.wsd.wednet.edu)

Gayle Northcutt  
WHS English Teacher  
Negotiations Representative  
[northcutt.g@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:northcutt.g@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu)

Eleanor Sellers  
Director, Career and Tech. Educ.  
[sellers.e@mail1.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:sellers.e@mail1.wsd.wednet.edu)

Jesús Hernández  
President,  
Wenatchee School Board  
[hernandez.j@mail1.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:hernandez.j@mail1.wsd.wednet.edu)

Kris Cameron  
WHS Spanish Teacher  
Research Assistant  
[cameron.k@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu](mailto:cameron.k@mail3.wsd.wednet.edu)

## Team Members Attend Evaluation Workshop

Bill Eagle and Eleanor Sellers attended "Creating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teachers for Washington State," a workshop held at the North Central ESD. This workshop is based on the research of Dr. Marilyn L. Simpson and her report "The Art and Science of Professional Teaching: A Developmental Model for Demonstrating Positive Impact on Student Learning." Dr. Simpson's work was financed by the State of Washington OSPI, Washington Education Association (WEA) and the Stuart Foundation. Contributors to the model include: OSPI, WEA, Association of Washington State Principals (AWSP), Seattle University, Cascade UniServ Council and over 19 school districts around the state.

This evaluation model is based on 6 student-centered standards with 21 supporting strands. Each supporting strand gives exemplars for student performance, describes stages of professional growth and teacher practice, provides professional growth suggestions and a narrative evaluation tool. (For an example of a standard and supporting strand, see page two.)

The program examined successful student behavior and relied heavily on video portfolio evidence. It was originally intended for teacher evaluation embedded in professional development. The process is meant to be collaborative. It begins by working with two or three strands and eventually includes all standards and strands. The system uses self-assessment to enhance professional growth capacity. As Bill said, "It forces you to look at all aspects of teaching, not just the areas you're good at."

According to Bill and Eleanor, a potential drawback to this system is the lack of empirical evidence of its usefulness with minority students. They also had concerns about the standards being age appropriate for all students. Although this system of evaluation is being promoted by OSPI, many characterize it as "not user friendly," weighing in at over 100 pages. The strands also identify learning opportunities provided by the teacher, but the teacher is assessed based on student behaviors. Since its initial support for the research into this process, WEA has learned that the Stuart Foundation, another sponsor of the project, is considering promoting this model as a means to initiate a merit pay system for teachers. To see a copy of the report, contact Bill Eagle, Eleanor Sellers, Joan Wright or Mary Armstrong.

From "**The Art and Science of Professional Teaching**"  
by Dr. Marilyn L. Simpson

**Standard 1:** Student Learning is structured for Understanding (there are six standards)

**Supporting Strand 1:** Students Engage in Challenging Curriculum (there are three supporting strands for Std. 1)

**Supporting Strand 1, Part A:**

Exemplars of Positive Impact on Student Learning

There is evidence that all students have the opportunity to:

- 1a.** know the learning targets and what is required to meet them
- 1b.** know when they have reached a new level of performance and what they need to do to move to the next
- 1c.** know how to access additional support when needed

**Supporting Strand 1, Part B:** Description of Teacher Practice -Stages of Professional Growth (narrative description of each stage)

- Beginning Performance
- Building Knowledge
- Exploring Options and Making Plans
- Maturing Performance
- Optimal Performance

**Supporting Strand 1, Part C:** Professional Growth Suggestions

This page contains information based on each stage described above. Sections begin with, "Teacher will use research of current literature to . . . Teacher will explore methodologies that . . . Teacher will plan . . . Teacher uses action research to demonstrate . . . Teacher demonstrates proficiency by showing . . ."

**Supporting Strand 1, Part D:** Evaluation (For exemplar 1a above)

**Below Standard:** Students work on the assignments with limited knowledge of the related learning targets or the progression of steps to successfully reach them.

**At Standard:** Students demonstrate a clear understanding of the required learning targets, the expectations to reach them, and connect their own explorations to the appropriate learning targets.

**Above Standard:** Students articulate the learning process to reach the learning targets. They apply that process independently to expand their depth of knowledge beyond the scope of the required curriculum or assignments.

*"Internal coherence around instructional practice is a prerequisite for strong performance whatever the requirements of the external accountability system."*

*Richard F. Elmore  
in "Educational Leadership"*

**Kennewick School District  
Experiments with Evaluation Model**

Joan Wright, Mary Armstrong and Jodi Smith recently traveled to Kennewick to observe and interview staff involved in some innovative evaluation programs in the Kennewick School District. Some of the highlights include:

- Principals spend 2 hrs per day/10 hrs per week conducting "walk-throughs" of classrooms in their buildings and in their feeder schools.
- Joint professional development training has helped staff and administration develop a common understanding of what rigor and engagement in the classroom looks like.
- A Peer Assistance and Review Panel names three Consulting Peer Educators, who serve on a rotational basis for three years, to work with 15-20 new teachers each. Their role is assistance rather than evaluation and the positions are funded by the local teachers' association and levy dollars.
- Consulting Peer Educators frequently conduct joint observations with administrators.
- Staff members with 29 or more years of experience are paid to mentor younger teachers and to serve on professional growth teams.

**Professional Practice Too Small to Read?**

If the electronic version of this newsletter comes to you in a font size that is difficult to read, simply click on VIEW in your menu bar and scroll down to ZOOM. This will allow you to choose a larger font size.

Published by Kris Cameron  
Administrative Intern, Research Assistant  
Cameron.k@mail3.wed.wednet.edu

