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# An Evaluation of the Wenatchee High School Connections Program

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# AN EVALUATION OF THE WENATCHEE HIGH SCHOOL CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

A Project

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by

Norlinda Connolly and Michael Lee Mills

July, 1998

#### **ABSTRACT**

# AN EVALUATION OF THE WENATCHEE HIGH SCHOOL CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

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Norlinda Connolly and Michael Lee Mills

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The purpose of this study is to assess student opinion of the Connections

Program. Connections is a program offered to freshmen at Wenatchee High School
to assist students with the transition from middle school. This program offers
block schedule as well as curriculum and technology integration, job shadows and
community service projects. In order to assess the program and offer
improvements, two populations of Connections students were surveyed and data
were analyzed. The literature related to integration of technology and curriculum,
job shadows and community service projects was reviewed.

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#### CHAPTER I

#### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### Introduction

The transition from middle school to high school can many times be a difficult one. Typically, students who drop out of high school do so during the ninth or tenth grade. Wenatchee High School, with their growing population, tried to create a program that could aid incoming freshmen in their first year of high school. Currently in Wenatchee, there are three middle schools that graduate students to only one high school. Although the high school may not be considered over-populated, it can be overwhelming to a child used to a school with one quarter of the population.

The rationale for the Connections program came from three basic observations or discoveries: 1.) Too many of the freshmen were failing classes and not making a successful transition to high school. 2.) The freshmen could see no connection between school learning and their future. 3.) Many freshmen were disconnected learners and not involved in school activities. (see Appendix A). With these problems identified, teachers from Wenatchee High set out to create a program for a selected group of freshmen. These teachers visited schools throughout Washington state which offered various forms of block scheduling.

The block portion of the freshman schedule consists of four subjects (Math, Science, English and Keyboarding). The curriculum in the Connections courses is the same as other ninth grade classes. The lessons however may be quite different, as teachers from Connections plan many lessons together. The purpose of the combined planning is to take the skills and concepts taught in one class and be able to tie it to what is being learned in another. Several of the lessons in the four Connections classes are connected. (see Appendix A) Following fourth period, freshman have the rest of the day to take P.E. (which is a requirement at Wenatchee High) and electives. The Connections teachers meet for a common prep during fifth period. During this prep, teachers from the four subject areas meet to discuss cross curricular lessons or projects, student attendance and performance. Teachers use this time to compare observations concerning the students. If a problem arises concerning a student in a particular class, it is likely to be addressed quickly with input from the other teachers.

One of the goals of Connections is to create a relevance between what students learn in the classroom and the outside world. To accomplish this task, Connections incorporates community service work as well as job shadows. During the course of the year, students in Connections are required to participate in community service, arranged by Wenatchee High School staff. A variety of local businesses and agencies provide a setting for the community service portion of the program. With the help of Wenatchee High School's School-to-Work Coordinator, students in Connections also experience job shadows. Students have

the opportunity to job shadow a variety of different careers, based on their interests.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess Wenatchee High School(WHS) students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the WHS Connections program. These are the unique elements of Connections:

- 1.) Integrated Curriculum
- 2.) Integration of Technology
- 3.) Career infusion through Job Shadows
- 4.) Community Service Projects

It is the intent of this study to use the information gathered from the students to better the program in years to come. To accomplish this purpose, a survey was distributed to current, as well as previous Connections students.

### Limitations of the Study

- 1. Research The review literature and research summarized in Chapter II contains only certain portions of the Connections program. Connections is truly a unique program and differs from traditional block schedule institutions.
- 2. <u>Populations Surveyed</u> The study was limited to two populations. One population consisted of high school juniors who had been in Connections as freshmen. The second population consisted of current freshmen in Connections. The number of returned parent permission slips, determined the number of

participants in each population. Ideally, the survey sample should represent the student population, with an equal gender distribution.

- 3. Characteristics of the Populations
- a. The students surveyed differed in age and maturity level.
- b. No student surveyed had the same experience.
- c. The findings of this study represented the responses and perceptions of the sample groups at only one time during the school year. (May 1998)
- 4. <u>Survey Instrument</u> Limitations assigned to the survey instrument in the study included the following items:
  - a. The survey instrument was designed by the authors.
  - b. The sample groups (approximately 25 percent of total population) limits what can be generalized from the respondents. This is not a true representation of the entire group.
  - c. Respondents to the survey did complete the survey in a classroom setting during the school day. Although there was not a specified time frame to finish the survey, some students may have felt rushed.
  - d. The group of juniors that were surveyed were required to recall Connections from their freshmen year. Lack of immediacy is therefore a limitation of the survey instrument.
  - e. <u>Presentation and Analysis of Data</u> The study concerned itself primarily with the presentation and analysis of the survey data obtained from the students of the Connections program.

#### Definition of Terms

Definitions of terms used throughout this study are as follows:

Block Schedule School class schedule that provide students longer periods of time.

Connections Program A four subject block schedule, team taught by four teachers,

which incorporates integrated curriculum, community service and job shadows.

The program is designed to assist incoming freshmen with the transition from middle school to high school.

<u>Integrated Curriculum</u> A school curriculum that draws from two or more subject areas and focuses on a theme or concept rather than on a single subject.

<u>Integrated Technology</u> The use of technology (computers, Internet, etc.) to prepare and present projects and reports.

Job Shadows An activity where the students actually spend part of the day watching a professional perform in a job they are interested in.

#### CHAPTER II

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter summarizes literature reviews of the following topics

- 1. Integrated Curriculum
- 2. Integration of Technology
- 3. Job Shadows
- 4. Community Involvement
- 5. Summary

Current data were obtained from a computer search of the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) and the Electric Library. The authors also conducted research from a variety of other sources.

#### Integrated Curriculum

Integrated curriculum, also known as interdisciplinary education is not merely another pedagogical technique but a complex and holistic approach to teaching (Paranitis, 1995). Interdisciplinary models challenge the administrators, teachers, and students to change the traditional teaching methods. These models provide students with a learning experience that demonstrates explicit connections between subject matter and real life. Student learns abstract concepts by their applications to real life situations.

Interdisciplinary programs incorporate practical methods to make academics relevant and empower students to strive for higher standards. Interdisciplinary programs appeal to a broad range of students including the challenged and gifted.

The low attendance and high drop-out rates in the early 1970's compelled the restructuring of public education (Banks, 1994). A pilot study emerged to address the issues of poor attendance and high drop-out rates. The pilot study has provided valuable information in the planning and design of eight new interdisciplinary models which were implemented in six school districts in California from 1985 to 1986. While the study fell short of its goal in raising school attendance, it helped to create training programs that incorporate technology into academics; these programs include Career cluster and Tech.

Interdisciplinary curriculum connects life inside the classroom with life outside the classroom. Teachers attempt to empower the students to see how the concepts they learn are applied to everyday life. Since different aspects of social problems are interdependent, they require problem solving skills that are interdisciplinary in nature (Frazee & Rudniski, 1995).

Interdisciplinary curriculum requires the merging of distinct content areas.

This may prove a straightforward task, integrating Math and Science, for example: integrating content areas such as Social Studies and Science presents a more difficult task. Preservice and inservice teachers reported difficulty in integrating social studies and science (Sunal, 1994). With the availability of sample interdisciplinary

lessons, however, teachers who are inexperienced in integrating content areas can still reap the benefits without extensive research and planning.

Integrated curriculum is, by far, considered the most powerful tool of educational reform (Paranitis, 1995). Teachers must not lose sight of the factors essential to the success of Integrated Curriculum. The key components to the success of integrated curriculum program are:

- 1. Time -The collaborative team requires a lot of time to plan, implement and evaluate the program. The collaborative teams of the teacher-designed interdisciplinary curriculum at Manhattan's Central Park East Secondary School attributed the success of their program to the sufficient allotment of team prep time. Constant and consistent communication between team members allows for the development of fruitful collaboration.
- 2. Resources Like any school reform projects, interdisciplinary program requires the commitment of resources. Trying to implement a project such as this, with fewer resources than it demands may contribute to the failure of the program. Adequate resources alone may not guarantee the success an interdisciplinary program but the shortage of them may result in its failure. Apart from financial resources, administrative support is as equally important. When resolving conflicts concerning room assignments scheduling, materials teachers can benefit from administrator's input and feedback.

- 3. Incentives Taking on new responsibility at times requires incentives.

  So in order to attract teachers to be involved in an interdisciplinary program, incentives are provided in forms of grant money, reduced teaching load, block programming, coverage for training session and relief from building assignments.
- 4. <u>Commitment of talented teachers</u> It is essential to have teachers who are dedicated and enthusiastic about teaching to form collaborative team. Prior experience may not be as important as the belief in interdisciplinary as being a better way of teaching.
- 5. Student population Even though it is important to have the best teachers for the program, the students in the program should be the representative of the student body. Having a student population that is made up of the top 20% in academic achievement in an interdisciplinary program will not prove the viability of this program for the general student population, therefore defeats the ultimate purpose of educational reform.
- 6. Flexibility It is also important for the collaborative team not to adhere rigidly to its integrated model. There can be various degrees of integration between content areas. An integrated program need not integrate daily and in all the subjects. In fact, an integrated class project is an excellent way of starting an interdisciplinary program.

  An all or nothing approach to curriculum integration may be

impossible to implement. The collaborative team should not lose sight of the primary goal of an interdisciplinary program that is to be effective at integrating curriculum.

#### Integration of Technology

Computer technology is a valuable learning tool. Various educational software are readily available and many more are in the making. The potential of computer technology as educational tool is limitless. The current emphasis is towards interactive learning. It is a popular belief that students learn best when they are engaged actively. By incorporating technology into the curriculum, teacher's role shifts from information giver to facilitator (Thomas & Knezek, 1991). When technology is integrated into the curriculum, students take a more active role in their learning. In order to keep up with the ever changing development of technology, it is crucial that preservice and inservice teachers maintain continual training.

Integration of technology into the curriculum enables students to solve broad problems. By using the Internet, CD-ROM encyclopedias and on-line references they can gather necessary information. They can, then, organize the information using the word processing programs and present a solution in the form of quality, finished product. Most urban public schools have been successful in integrating technology in their curriculum. One major problem with integrating technology is the lack of resources and funding. The funding not only allows for the purchasing of materials but also for the on-going training for teachers. A poll

taken by Josten's Learning Corporation and the American Association of School Administration (AASA) states that two-thirds of those polled agreed that the primary uses of computers are for word processing, graphics and spreadsheets. The results also show that less one-third of the use of computers in school is for research on the Internet (Charp, 1997). It is evident from this study that the computers are not being used to its full capacity. This may be due to the teachers lack of knowledge and skill or resources. Even though technology is not the cureall for the problems in education, it has definitely created positive impacts.

#### <u>Job Shadows</u>

Students have frequently remarked that school is boring. One does not have to look far for evidence that proves many students are disengaged and uninterested in their studies. The Sloan Study finds that students feel challenged and engaged only when they are able to relate what they have learned in the classroom to their future. When interviewed, most of the students lacked the knowledge of the career path that were of interest to them. The study revealed only those who participated in the work internship program were able to voice significant information about career field (Steinberg, 1997).

No one source brought about the school to career reform. However, a poor record of transition and readiness from school to career for many youths has driven those concerned to look at career infusion as an option of resolving this problem. By introducing career concepts and strategies as part of the regular curriculum, educators instill relevance and quality to subjects taught in school (Garnet, 1997).

Dramatic changes are occurring in the workplace due to the evolving technology and competitive business environment.

In 1994, the Federal School to Work Opportunity Act was enacted with a vision to make learning more purposeful and engaging to students. Students then will be able relate what they learn to various work identities. It was during this time that schools nationwide are starting to implement career infusion into their curriculum. These programs are also recognized as school-to career (STC) programs. Job shadow is a small scale STC program. Most job shadows last 2 to 4 hours per session, one or two times per year. Even though the amount of time spent is brief, students still benefit from this experience. Job shadows allow students to explore careers of their interest. Students also gain first-hand knowledge about a particular job from being in the job setting. Furthermore, they are able to observe how theoretical knowledge is put into practice. Job shadows also allow students to reflect on the career path that is of interest to them. Job shadows attempt to bring awareness to the students of the commitment involved in a particular job.

Students are not the only ones who benefit from job shadows. Employers who participate will have access to a pool of interested individuals who may be potential interns or employees. In addition, employers also gain the intrinsic reward of sharing their knowledge and expertise with interested students. In a sense, job shadows are means of involving the community with student learning.

#### Community Involvement

Community involvement is another attempt at making learning relevant to students. They learn to apply the skills and knowledge they acquired in the classroom and put them to practice through meaningful community projects.

Schools have been involved with community service activities for decades through food drives, entertaining at senior centers during holidays, fund raisers for victims of natural disasters and fires. All these activities bring awareness to the students of their role in the community. Community service per se is merely an add-on to the curriculum. The impact on student's learning is more significant when the community service becomes an integral part of the curriculum, hence, the term service learning. Students further intensify their understanding and learning when the community service is combined with reflective learning (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989).

According to Erickson, for most youngsters the early adolescence is the period of confusion associated with identity crisis (Travers, Elliot & Kratochwill, 1993). Youths are filled with self-doubts. They are walking contradictions. They can be self-absorbed and at the same time altruistic, conscientious yet irresponsible. During this stage, they also feel the need to be useful, respected and valued (Stephens, 1989). The adolescents need to harness and channel their abundant energy to create a positive difference in the world. Such accomplishment can enhance their self-esteem (Travers, Elliot & Kratochwill, 1993). The respect they gain from being involved in the community service can make them feel less

isolated. Through community service they can associate with adults in a capacity that allows them to feel valued. Under the guidance of adults, they can become contributors, planners and leaders.

According to James Kielsmeier, the President of the National Youth

Leadership Council, service learning eliminates the tension between students and
teachers. Teachers learn to trust students with responsibilities. Service learning
empowers both teachers and students to take control of their learning.

The Federal and National Community Service Act of 1990 provided support and funding for the exploration and implementation of service learning programs in public schools. The Corporation for National and Community Service brought together various volunteer organizations and established a K-12 National Service Learning Clearinghouse to assist public school in setting forth service learning programs.

A study done by the National Association of Partners in Education indicates that service learning produces benefits that are useful to students throughout their lives. These benefits include self-esteem enhancement, improvement in problem solving and collaborative skills, development of civic responsibility and work ethic.

Evaluations of several schools which conducted tutoring program as a service learning project demonstrated the improvement of grades among tutors and 'tutees' (Stephens, 1989). In this program, middle school students who were identified as potential dropouts were trained as tutors at an elementary school. Two years after the implementation of the program, success was evident. The

tutors displayed significant gains in attendance, test scores with fewer disciplinary referrals.

#### CHAPTER III

#### PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to assess performance and perceptions of students in the Connections program. Specific attention was given to the unique elements of the program:

- 1. Integrated Curriculum
- 2. Integrated Technology
- 3. Career infusion through Job Shadows
- 4. Community Service Projects

The following procedures used in conducting the present study have been presented in Chapter III:

- 1. Need for study
- 2. Design and development of survey instrument
- 3. Population groups surveyed
- 4. Administration of the survey instrument
- 5. Treatment of data obtained from the instrument

# Need for the Study

The Connections program has recently finished its fourth year at

Wenatchee High School. Although a great deal of time and effort was invested in
starting the program, relatively little research has been conducted since. The
teachers involved in the program expressed an interest in the study. The study

itself is designed to fulfill the need of an evaluation of the Connections program, and will also provide information for further development.

# Design and Development of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was designed by the authors,

Norlinda Connolly and Michael Lee Mills. Input from current teachers in

Connections was also considered in the development of the survey.

#### Population Groups Surveyed

For the purpose of this study, two population groups were surveyed. The first population consists of a group of juniors that were enrolled in the Connections program's second year. The second population consists of a group of freshmen currently enrolled in the program.

#### Administration of the Survey Instrument

In May 1998, the authors notified parents of potential survey participants, and procured consent. (see Appendix B) Upon return of the parent permission slip, students were administered the survey. The survey was returned from the participants at the end of the class period.

#### Treatment of Data Obtained from the Instrument

Of the students with a returned parent permission slip, all students from both populations participated in the survey. Due to the relatively small survey sample, (approximately 18 percent) consideration needs to be given to the findings

of the study. The results of the survey were tallied for both populations and presented using a narrative format.

## CHAPTER IV (A)

#### RESULTS OF THE STUDY FROM FRESHMAN SAMPLE

#### by Norlinda Connolly

Data presented in this Chapter has been organized in sections that correspond with the main aspects of the survey instrument (See Appendix B) used in this study:

- 1. Appeal of the Program
- 2. Connections as a Transition to High School
- 3. Interdisciplinary Projects
- 4. Job Shadows
- 5. Community Service Involvement
- 6. Strength and Weakness of the Connection Program
- 7. Suggested Changes

Analysis and discussion of the results are in a narrative format. The majority of the responses on the survey instrument were tabulated on a percentage basis.

# Appeal of the Program

A summary of participants' responses regarding their opinion about the appeal of the program has been presented as the following. Respondents answered the following questions:

2. If you had a choice, would you choose the Connections Program again

- 3. Would you recommend this Program to an incoming 9th Grade student at WHS?
- 4. Would you like to see Connections offered in 10th Grade?

When asked if given the choice would they have chosen the Connections

Program (Question # 2), nine respondents (fifty percent) indicated that they

would chose to be in Connections again. Five respondents (twenty-eight percent)

would strongly agree to be in Connections again while three respondents

(seventeen percent) were indifferent. Only one (six percent) respondent would not chose to be in Connections again.

For Question #3, seven respondents (thirty-nine percent) would strongly recommend this program to other incoming 9th graders. Seven respondents (thirty-nine percent) would recommend it to incoming 9th graders. Two respondents (eleven percent) were indifferent. Two respondents (eleven percent) would not recommend it to others.

In response to Question #4, nine respondents (fifty percent) were indifferent about having a similar program for 10th Grade. Four respondents (twenty-two percent) did not want Connections offered in 10th Grade. Five respondents (twenty-eight) would like to see it offered in 10th Grade.

#### Connections as a transition from Middle School to High School

The following is a summary of Connections students' responses regarding Connections as a transition from middle school to high school. Respondents answered the following question:

1. Has the Connections Program assisted your transition from middle school to Wenatchee High School?

When asked the above question, twelve respondents (sixty-seven percent) agreed that Connections helped them with the transition to WHS. Two respondents (eleven percent) strongly agreed that this program assisted them with the transition. Three respondents (seventeen percent) were indifferent. One respondent (six percent) felt that Connections did not assist him with the transition to high school.

# Interdisciplinary Projects

The question and summary of the participants' responses with regard to the interdisciplinary projects are as follows:

8. Would you like to see more projects in Connections?

When asked the above question, seven respondents (thirty-nine percent) were in favor of more projects while five respondents (twenty-eight percent) disagreed to more projects.

## <u>Job Shadows</u>

The summary of participants' responses concerning the job shadows component of the program is presented below. The participants were asked the following question:

5. Do you find job shadows to be of much value to you?

Eleven respondents (sixty-one percent) agreed that job shadows were of value to them. Three respondents (seventeen percent) were indifferent while four respondents (twenty-two percent) disagreed that it was of any value to them.

Community Service Projects

A summary of the participants' responses to the question concerning the Community Service aspect of the Connections Program is presented below:

7. Have you benefited from the Community Service Projects of the Connections Program?

Ten respondents (fifty-six percent) agreed that they had benefited from the projects while two respondents (eleven percent) remarked that they had not benefited from them.

### Strength and Weaknesses of the Connections Program

The following question was posed to seek responses regarding the strength and weakness of the program. The summary of the responses is as follows:

10. What are the aspects of the Connections Program that you like most?

In response to the question, some participants gave multiple answers.

Respondents indicated that having the class blocked together gave them more time to get their assignments completed. Two respondents (eleven percent) stated that the camaraderie and comfort from knowing everyone in the program is a strength of this program. Six (thirty-three percent) felt that having the same teachers created a good rapport between them and the teachers. Five respondents (twenty-

eight percent) considered job shadows a strong component of the program. Four respondents (twenty-two percent) indicated that the community service aspect was the program's strong point.

Participants also added comments concerning the weakness of the program. Five students (twenty-eight percent) indicated that there was too much work given and insufficient time to complete it. Two respondents (eleven percent) stated that the lecture hall (LGI) where the debates were carried out was not equipped with microphones.

Other components respondents felt to be the weakness were:

- Much more work in Science than in other 9th Grade Science
- Not enough individual help from staff
- Keyboarding was a waste of time
- Not enough large group activities
- No freedom in the choice of topics for Projects / Debates
- Not enough field trip

# Additional Comments and Suggested Changes

The participants were asked the question below to seek suggestion on the improvement of the Connections Program. The summary of the responses is as follows:

- 9. What kind of changes would you recommend to benefit the Connections Program?
- Less job shadows and community services

- More field trips
- Plan the big project for separate time slot so that there will be more time to work on them. (two responses)
- To have microphone in LGI
- To have the freedom to select own topics for projects and debates
- To have a variety of activities including large group activities and also activities including other students who are not in Connections
- To have more one-on-one help available
- More communication between teachers so that workload assigned by teachers are not overwhelming students

#### CHAPTER IV (B)

#### RESULTS OF THE STUDY FROM JUNIOR SAMPLE

#### by Michael Lee Mills

Data presented in this Chapter has been organized in sections that correspond with the main aspects of the survey instrument (See Appendix B) used in this study:

- 1. Appeal of the Program
- 2. Connections as a Transition to High School
- 3. Interdisciplinary Projects
- 4. Job Shadows
- 5. Community Service Involvement
- 6. Strength and Weakness of the Connection Program
- 7. Suggested Changes

Analysis and discussion of the results are in a narrative format. The majority of the responses on the survey instrument were tabulated on a percentage basis.

# Appeal of the Program

A summary of participants' responses regarding their opinion about the appeal of the program has been presented as the following. Respondents answered the following questions:

2. If you had a choice, would you choose the Connections Program again for 9th Grade?

- 3. Would you recommend this Program to an incoming 9th Grade student at WHS?
- 4. Would you like to see Connections offered in 10th Grade?

When asked if given the choice would they had chosen the Connections

Program (Question # 2), four respondents (twenty-five percent) indicated that they
would choose to be in Connections again. Five respondents (thirty-one percent)
would strongly agree to be in Connections again while four respondents (twentyfive percent) were indifferent. Four respondents (nineteen percent) would not
choose to be in Connections again.

For Question #3, five respondents (thirty-one percent) would strongly recommend this program to other incoming 9th graders. Six respondents (thirty-eight percent) would recommend it to incoming 9th graders. Three respondents (nineteen percent) were indifferent. Two respondents (thirteen percent) would not recommend it to others.

In response to Question #4, three respondents (nineteen percent) were indifferent about having similar program for 10th Grade. Seven respondents (forty-four percent) did not want Connections offered in 10th Grade. Six respondents (thirty-eight percent) would like to see it offered in 10th Grade.

# Connections as a transition from Middle School to High School

The following is a summary of Connections students' responses regarding Connections as a transition from middle school to high school. Respondents answered the following question:

1. Has the Connections Program assisted your transition from middle school to Wenatchee High School?

When asked the above question, six respondents (thirty-eight percent) agreed that Connections helped them with the transition to WHS. Two respondents (thirteen percent) strongly agreed that this program assisted them with the transition. Seven respondents (forty-four percent) were indifferent. One respondent (six percent) felt that Connections did not assist him with the transition to high school.

# Interdisciplinary Projects

The question and summary of the participants' responses with regard to the interdisciplinary projects are as follows:

8. Would you like to see more projects in Connections?

When asked the above question, thirteen respondents (eighty-two percent) are in favor of more projects while two respondents (thirteen percent) disagree to more projects.

## Job Shadows

The summary of participants' responses concerning the job shadows component of the program is presented below. The participants were asked the following question:

5. Do you find job shadows to be of much value to you?

Thirteen respondents (eighty-one percent) agreed that job shadows were of value to them. One respondent (six percent) was indifferent while two respondents (thirteen percent) disagreed that it was of any value to them.

#### Community Service Projects

A summary of the participants' responses to the question concerning the Community Service aspect of the Connections Program is presented as follows:

7. Have you benefited from the Community Service Projects of the Connections Program?

Nine respondents (fifty-six percent) agreed that they have benefited from the projects while two respondents (thirteen percent) remarked that they had not benefited from them.

### Strengths of the Connections Program

The following question was posed to seek responses regarding the strength of the program. The summary of the responses is as follows:

10. What are the aspects of the Connections Program that you like most?

In response to the question, some participants gave multiple answers. Seven respondents (forty-four percent) indicated that having the class blocked together gave them more time to get their assignments completed. Two respondents (thirteen percent) stated that the camaraderie and comfort from knowing everyone in the program is a strength of this program. Four (twenty-five percent) felt that having the same teachers created a good rapport between them and the teachers.

Four respondents (twenty-five percent) considered job shadows a strong component of the program. One respondent (six percent) indicated that the community service aspect was the program's strong point. One respondent (six percent) enjoyed the debates in the program. While three respondents (nineteen percent) liked the field trip that was offered.

#### Additional Comments and Suggested Changes

The participants were asked the question below to seek suggestion on the improvement of the Connections Program. The summary of the responses is as follows:

9. What kind of changes would you recommend to benefit the Connections Program?

Some students chose to give multiple answers to this question as well. Three students (nineteen percent) felt more job shadows would benefit the program.

Two respondents (thirteen percent) would like to see more advanced classes offered in Connections while two others (thirteen percent) felt more homework should be assigned. Other suggested changes include:

- Fewer oral reports
- Smaller groups for group work
- More group work
- Organize fund raising projects to earn money for field trips
- Reunion of Connections students in junior or senior year
- More prep time for projects

- Do not block the classes
- Block the classes more

#### CHAPTER V

# SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Summary**

In order to meet the needs of the schools in this era, the method of teaching has to change accordingly. For the last four years, Wenatchee High School has implemented the Connections Program to meet those needs. The building blocks of this program consist of interdisciplinary projects, technology integration, job shadows and community involvement.

## Major Findings

The analysis of the data was organized and presented in categories that correspond with the key elements of the survey instrument used in the study. (see Appendix B)

- 1. Appeal of the Program
- 2. Connections as transition to High School
- 3. Interdisciplinary projects
- 4. Job Shadows
- 5. Community Service Involvement
- 6. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Connections Program
- 7. Suggested Changes as recommended by participants

Moving from a middle school into a high school environment can be a tremendous change to most freshmen. Freshmen frequently remarked on the

schedule and the collaborative teaching team, students felt that they have sufficient time to complete their assignments without feeling overwhelmed. Students also felt that by having Connections teachers collaborate, there was more awareness of students' progress.

Being in Connections gave students a sense of camaraderie and the security of being in a 'school-within-a-school' environment. There were, however, complaints concerning the lack of individual assistance from the staff. Less than half of the students surveyed were in favor of seeing more interdisciplinary projects.

A small number of participants indicated that the job shadows were a waste of time. A number of the students would like to see more activities involving the entire Connections group. One of the group activities recommended were field trips.

Some of the students remarked that they would like more freedom in choosing the topics of the projects and debates.

#### **Conclusions**

The conclusion derived from the opinions of respondents are as follows:

- Connections has been successful in incorporating the key components of educational reform.
- 2. The block schedule provides more time for students to work on their assignments. It also provides time for the teachers to collaborate in the planning of lessons, assessments and tracking of students' progress.

- Being in Connections provides a sense of camaraderie among the participants therefore, made the transition to high school more manageable.
- 4. The goal of this program which is to create relevance between what students learn in the classroom with the real world is accomplished to some degree through job shadows, community service projects and interdisciplinary projects.

#### Recommendations

Analysis and conclusion of the data collected from the survey administrated to the junior and freshman groups led to the following suggested changes of the program.

- 1. That there would be more job shadows for students to participate in.
- That there would be more input from the students on the choice of group activities or projects.
- 3. That there would be more community service projects to enable students to apply what they learn in the classroom while simultaneously meeting the needs of the community.
- 4. That the Connections Program not to be offered in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade. The Connections program was meant to assist students in the transition from middle school to high school.

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# APPENDIX A Connections Program Information





### FRESHMAN BLOCK STUDENT DATA

<u>Year</u>	Average GPA	Average Absences per Semester
<b>1991-92</b> Blocked Freshman	3.24	2.2
Other Freshman taking Algebra I	2.92	3.5
All Freshman	2.27	6.4
1992-93		
Blocked Freshman	2.87	3.71
All Freshman	2.46	8.23
1993-94		
Blocked Freshman	2.76	4.95
All Freshman	2.56	5.38

## What is necessary in order to make a program like CONNECTIONS successful?

#### Structure

- 4 period blocked during the same time period (i.e., 1,2,3,4)
- Teachers who want to work together
- · A common prep for the teachers involved
- A group of students who have these teachers for all 4 of the classes
- Flexibility to organize the 4 period time slot any way the teachers decide.
   They meet with their students in single, double, or triple periods and may work individually with 25 students at a time or team together with 50, 75 or all 100 students.

## Making CONNECTIONS at Wenatchee High School



## Why did we look at doing a Connections program?

- Too many of our freshman were failing classes and not making a successful transition to high school.
- These students could see no connection between school learning and their future.
- Many were disconnected learners and not involved in school activities.

### Background Information

We had piloted various groupings of blocked freshman classes.

1992-93 we had 25 freshman who had 4 teachers in common.
 English, Algebra I, Keyboarding and Introduction to Science. These teachers had a common prep.

The students in this block did better on the average academically and attendance wise, but said four periods together was too much. Teachers said the Algebra I class tracked the students.

In 1993-94 we had 50 freshman who had 3 teachers in common.
 English, Introduction to Science and Keyboarding. These teachers had a common prep.

The students were not all in the same three classes at the same time and the periods were not all grouped in sequence (i.e., 1,2,3,4).

The students in this block did better on the average academically and with their attendance. The teachers had a common prep and dialogued about how their students were doing. They did a few integrated curriculum activities.

 In 1994-95 we had 50 freshman who had 3 teachers in common English, Introduction to Science and Keyboarding. One of the teachers was unable to have a common prep with the others.

The students were not all in the same three classes at the same time and the periods were not all grouped in sequence (i.e., 1.2,3,4).

The students in this block did better on the average academically and with their attendance. The teachers had a common prep and dialogued about how their students were doing. They did a few integrated curriculum activities.

## Staff Development Support

- Tech Prep Conference
- Visits to Sourth Central School District and Tumwater High School
- Vanguard Project curriculum integration training
- SLIG grant dollars support to meet together and plan curriculum.
- Building "at risk" student dollars for time to plan together
- Applied Curriculum workshops in Math and Communications
- Modem connection to other schools in the Vanguard curriculum integration project network for an ongoing exchange of ideas

# A well thought out and articulated process for inviting students to participate in the program

- Networking with middle school counselors and teachers to identify students who
  may have difficulty transitioning into high school. Blending this group of students
  with other students interested in an integrated curriculum approach. (Not a tracked
  program or a dumping ground for students with behavior problems.)
- Established criteria for student group selection including middle school attendance and GPA, gender and ethnicity.
- Connections teaching team reviews names of students recommended. List finalized by counselors and teaching team.

### Staff, Student and Parent Communication

- Letter sent to parents/guardians of students selected for Connections.
- Spring orientation evening meeting for parents and students selected for the Connections program
- Fall Open House where the teachers meet together with the parents
- · Joint progress reports
- Joint conferencing with parents and at times with students
- Ongoing reports to WHS staff, parents and the school board

## An agreed on and coordinated Study Skills structure for all four teachers to use with their students.

- Notebooks with dividers for each subject
- Color coded folders for each student each period
- A buddy system for students where by your partner gets assignments for you and puts them in your folder when you are absent
- Common classroom expectation for behavior

## Team Building Activities for the students

- Ropes course training in groups of 25 at the beginning of the year.
- Community Service project collecting aluminum cans from 6:30 to 7:30 PM on Halloween, to be followed with hot chocolate served in the high schore commons.

## A Career Infusion Component

- Orientation by Career Center Coordinators and counselors
- Use of the ACT Discover software program and career pathing concepts
- Follow up visits in small groups to the Career Center
- · Guest speakers for each career path
- Participation in the individually scheduled spring Frosh Conferences with their coun selor (to develop a 4 year plan of course work)

## An Evaluation process for the students and the program (formative and summative)

- · Portfolio assessment for the students
- Agreed on grading practices and percentages or points for integrated curriculum assignments.
- · A component of peer assessment when appropriate.
- An end of each semester report.

# What are some examples of integrated curriculum activities that we have done so far?

One major culminating project a quarter
 For example a research project involving a science topic

\*Math: Graphs, charts and statistics

\*Keyboarding: Formatting and writing the paper, preparing a data display using available technology

\*Science: Scientific topic researched, scientific method applied

\*English: Research skills, writing, oral presentation

Assessment of project: Equal %, "team assessment" by teachers, student groups presenting their project are given "x" number of points to divide up among their group based on the individual contribution of each group member, peer assessment of each group's oral presents

Insect Collection

\*Keyboarding: Label for insects typed up using specific font and size

\*Science: Collection and mounting of insects, insect lab

\*English: Lab written up

\*Math: Calculation of body weight, wing ratio, insect population, comparisons of jumping and lifting ability and insect size with humans

Writing Papers

\*English: Journal writing

\*Keyboarding: Format and type up the journal writing

Bar and Line Graphs

\*Science: Collect the data

\*Math: Develop bar and line graphs to clearly explain the data



## What are some of the challenges involved when doing a Connections program?

- Counselor and administrative time required to make the schedule work
- · Making sure the targeted group of students is appropriate
- Avoiding the perception that staff working on the program get special status



#### **Future Possibilities**

- Expand the Connections program to involve more Freshmen
- Develop a pilot Sophomore Connections program. Possible classes to link: English, history (World and/or Citizen Washington) or (World History and World Geography), P.E. & Health, Biology, Geometry and/or Applied Math II.

# CONNECTIONS FRESHMAN BLOCK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. How did I get selected for the CONNECTIONS Program?

Since CONNECTIONS is a pilot program and students in CONNECTIONS will be involved in some community projects, we needed to select students who are above average representatives of WHS. All students in CONNECTIONS were recommended as having good or outstanding qualities in terms of working cooperatively with others. Since the CONNECTIONS Block also has two sections of Algebra and two sections of Applied Math, we also selected students who could be appropriately placed into one of those Math levels.

2. How is CONNECTIONS different than any of the classes my friends who are not in CONNECTIONS are taking?

The CONNECTIONS Block includes classes that are required of all 9th grade students with the exception of Keyboarding, which is an elective for students but is a required part of the CONNECTIONS Block. The curriculum in CONNECTIONS is just like the curriculum in similar 9th grade classes except the four CONNECTIONS teachers will plan many lessons together. By planning lessons together, skills and concepts you are taught in one class will tie together with what you learn in another class. Several of the lessons you have in the four CONNECTIONS classes will be connected.

CONNECTIONS classes will not always use the same time schedule that your others classes use. Sometimes classes may meet for two or more periods at a time, and sometimes we will meet as a large CONNECTIONS group--all 100 or more of us. So, our four period block schedule will allow us to have much more flexibility than some of the other classes have.

## CONNECTIONS GOALS

A big goal of the CONNECTIONS Program is to show you the "connection" between what you learn in so of and what you need to learn to be successful in we and in life. We will help you learn more about yourself and your special abilities/talents. We will even help you consider career areas that may be a match to your interests and abilities. Once you have identified some career areas that are of interest to you, you will have opportunities to learn more about specific careers by job shadowing and even spending a day or more with a particular employer.

By the end of the year, in addition to gaining specific knowledge in the areas of English, Math, Science and Keyboarding, we hope you will have learned a lot more about yourself and how you can use the special talents and interests you have. We also hope you will gain a much better understanding of why the classes you take in high school will lead you to bigger and better things in the future.

We look forward to working with all our CONNECTIONS students!! It should be a fun and rewarding year for all of us! Call us at any time if you have questions or need extra assistance.

DAVE CARLSON ENGLISH 663.1369

Bob Long, Keyboarding 663-7329

Gloria Reichmann, Science 782-3649

Ted Van Bronkhorst, Math 1-548-5061

## 1996 - 97 Connections Program

Weekly Schedule

Monday:

Regular schedule

Tuesday:

Regular schedule

Wednesday:

Periods 1 and 2 meet for 90 minutes

Thursday:

Periods 3 and 4 meet for 90 minutes

Friday:

Regular schedule

**Quarterly Themes** 

1st quarter:

Discovery

2nd quarter:

**Perspectives** 

3rd quarter:

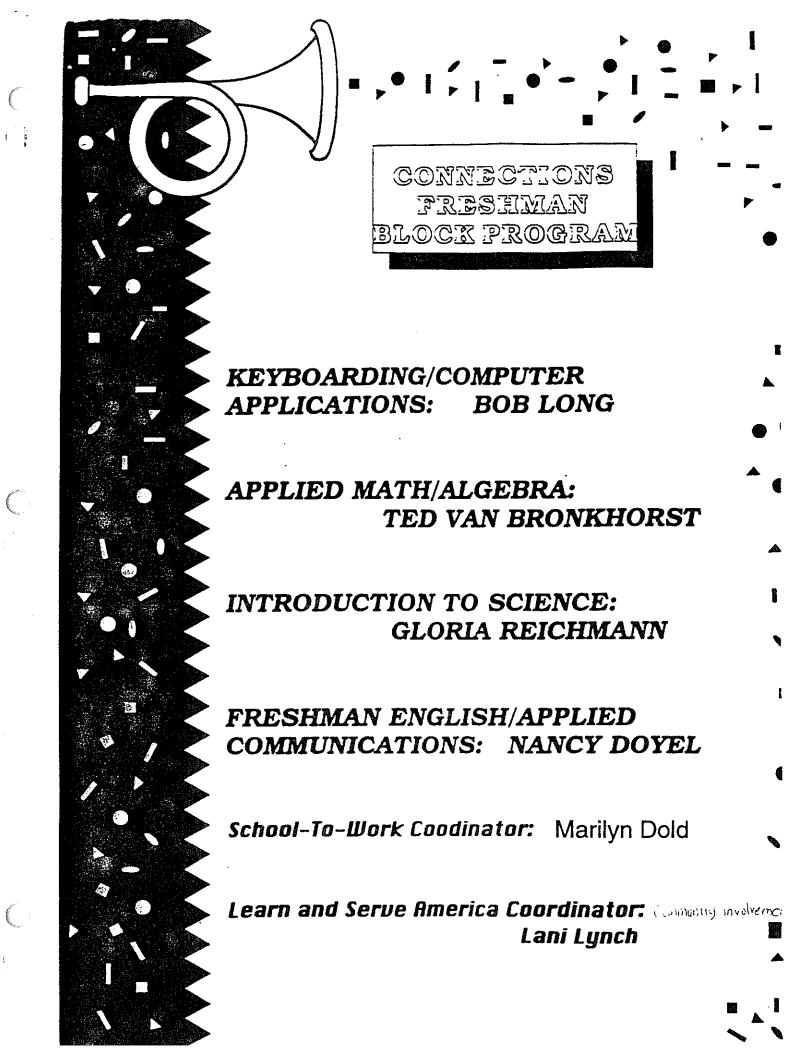
Conflict and Change

4th quarter:

Connections

(	
<b>A</b>	CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
	STATISTICAL OVERVIEW
	STUDENT SELECTION FOR THE CONNECTIONS PILOT PROGRAM WAS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:
	* Middle school teacher/counselor recommendations.
•	* 9th grade Math placement recommendations. (50%
.,	of the incoming students were placed in Pre-Algebra/
	Applied-Math; 50% were placed in Algebra I).
	* NCE scores in the areas of Reading and Math. (The majority of students fall in the average range for NCE's).
	* GPA's 50% of the students in the CONNECTIONS
9	Program came in with an overall GPA of 2.0 or lower; 50% came in with an overall GPA of 2.1 or higher.
	<ul> <li>Gender Balance: Incoming students were selected with a 50/50 gender balance.</li> </ul>
. <b>.</b>	* Ethnicity: Approxmately 80% of students are Causcasin and 20% are Hispanic or Asian.
	1st Semester Stats:
والمناسب بيروالة شاعر بديد فالأناف فاسا	CONNECTIONS students received an overall GPA of
	2.75 after one semester at WHS; all other 9th grade
	students received an overall GPA of 2.3.
********	CONNECTIONS students had an overall attendance
	rate of 97%; all other 9th grade students had an overall attendance rate of 93%.
	Drop out statistics are currently being compiled and we w
<b>ID</b>	conduct some longitudinal statistics on CONNECTIONS students as well.
*****	

## CONNECTIONS FRESENAN BLOCE Summary information-string PE During the 1994-95 school year. WHS has noted a block program for 100 freshman students. The ogram, CONNECTIONS, consists of a block of 4 ce subject areas--English, Science, Keyboarding and Math. Students in the CONNECTIONS Program are scheduled into the block classes during the 1st four periods of the day. Their afterno schedule is left open for electives and other required classe: Highlights of the 1994-95 program include: Quarterly interdisciplinary projects: Students have worked in teams of four to complete quarterly research projects. Each project has combined skills taught in all four block classes and has required extensive research, a typewritten report--complete with footnotes, Bibliography, Mathematical charts and graphs and a group presentation given in front of all 100 students. The year's culminating project involves research of each student's career path and includes at least one career path job shadow and the development of a 4-6 year educational plan. Job Shadows: 95% of the CONNECTIONS Students have completed one or more job shadow in the community. Ideally, the job shadows have occurred in the student's Career Path. Initial job shadows were facilitated by our School-To-Work coordinator, Shawn Regan. Career interest inventories and the initiation of a Career Portfolio have been facilitated by the WHS counselors the counselors in the Career Center, who have all worked with our students on numerous occasions and have provi significant support for the program. Opportunities for Community Service: 60% of the students in CONNECTIONS have opted to participate in volunteer community service projects. These opportunities have been arranged by Lani Lynch, the Learn and Serve America grant coordinator. Students also attended a session on service learning opportunities:





RATIONALE: Why is there a need for the CONNECTIONS Program?

Conditions that arose in the last part of the 20th Century have changed the terms for young people's entry into the world of work. We now have a globel economy and there is an explosion of technology on the job. The skills WE needed for success are very different than the skills students today need for success. Though the world has changed rapidly, schools today look very much the way they did 100 years ago. CONNECTIONS is one attempt to provide a student learning community that will give students a "jump start" on skills needed for future success.

The transition from middle school to high school can be a difficult one. Typically, students who drop out of high school do so during 9th or 10th grade. To some students, a school day seems fragmented as they attend 7 different classes that don't always seem related. CONNECTIONS provides just one more option for students and includes a curriculum which links what is learned in one class to another. The CONNECTIONS Block also provides a strong home base for students and facilitates close teacher-student rapport.

Students need to be shown the connection between schooling and the real world. Through career assessment, planning and exploration, CONNECTIONS students will chart a 5-8 year course of study and learn the relevance of classes they are taking to career goals. At the end of each class period, students should be able to answer the following two questions:

What did I learn? In what ways can I USE what I learned?

"Expand the classroom so that students learn how academic material will help them succeed in life. Help students make the connection between what they learn and their lives outside of school."



- 1. HAS THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM BEEN OF
  ASSISTANCE TO YOUR CHILD IN HIS/HER TRANSITION
  TO WENATCHEE HIGH SCHOOL?
  YES- 86% NO OR UNDECIDED-14%
- 2. WOULD YOU CHOOSE THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
  AGAIN FOR YOUR SON/DAUGHTER?
  YES-88% NO OR UNDECIDED-12%
- 3. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE PROGRAM TO AN INCOMING 9TH GRADER?

  YES-88% NO OR UNDECIDED-12%
- 4. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE A CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
  OPTION OFFERED IN 10TH GRADE?
  YES- 79% NO OR UNDECIDED-21%

#### SAMPLE COMMENTS:

"Our son has always had a hard time keeping up with homework/studying.
The way the classes coordinate their lessons has made a big difference."
"The Program has made the difference for our child. Without it, high school

"The Program has made the difference for our child. Without it, high school would be very defeating for her."

"To make it through 9th grade feeling that you can make it through high school successfully has set our daughter up mentally for the following 3 years."

"We like the way the four classes are related and there is strong interaction between the four teachers."

"My son received his best grades ever this year and feels good about attending school for the first time in his life. A large share of his success can be attributed to the Connections Program."

"The teacher/student relationship in the Connections Program is excellent because all four teachers know each student very well."

The program has shown students how subjects relate to each other and to life."

"The skills taught in the four classes are reinforced and students get a strong preparation for the rest of high school. Everyone should be required to do the reports and keyboarding required in Connections."

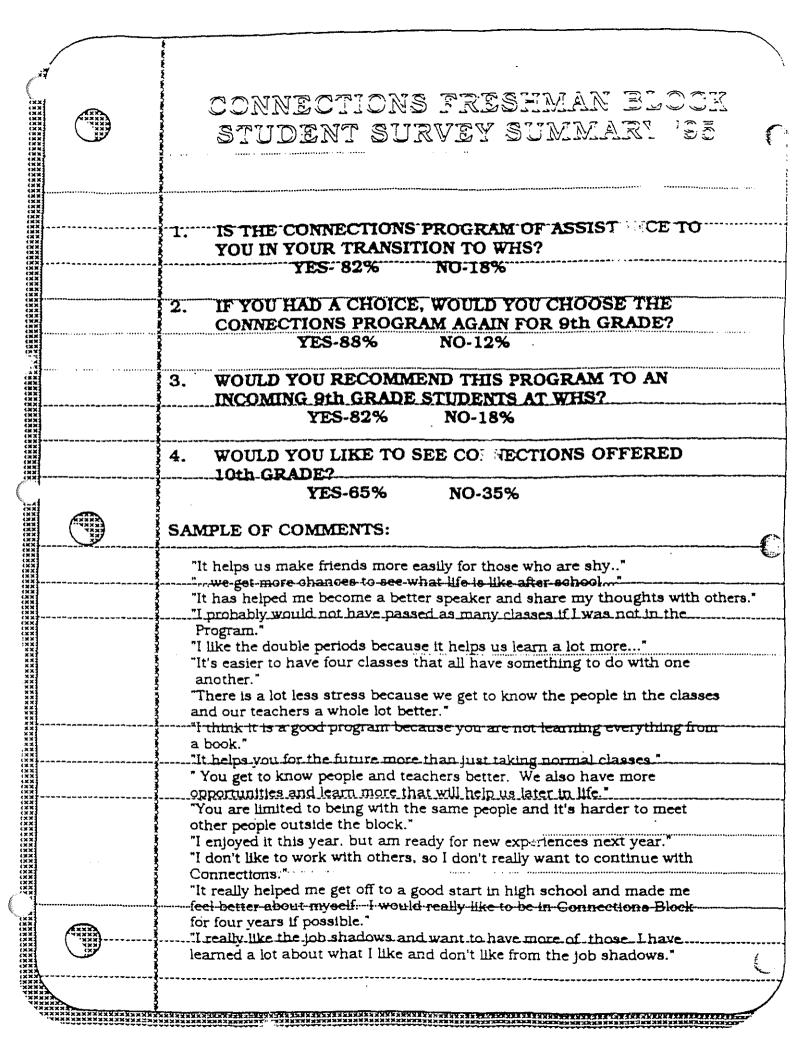
"This program has helped my daughter, who is very shy, make friends and feel very comfortable about school."

"Our daughter's only complaint is that she wanted to meet more students and she felt her options were limited in that regard because of the block."

## 1994/95 - 1ST QUARTER/1ST SEMSTER -9TH GRADE GPA/ATTENDANCE COMPARISON

		9TH GRADE	CLASS-1ST QL	JARTER 1994			
TOTALS		DAYS PRES	AVG PRES	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA
School Days	43	20943	93%	1623	7%	1422.96	2.45
Enrollment	581						
Possible Days	22566						
		CONNECT	IONS-1ST QUA	RTER 1994			
TOTALS		DAYS PRES	AVG PRES	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA
School Days	43	3847	96%	162	4%	265.176	2.88
Enrollment	94			•			
Possible Days	22566						
TOTALS School Days Enrollment Possible Days	46 584 45250	9TH GRADE DAYS PRES 41625	CLASS 1ST SE AVG PRES 92%	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS 8%	GPA 1353.08	AVG GPA 2.32
TOTALS		CONNECTI DAYS PRES	ONS-1ST SEME	STER 1995 DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA
School Days	46	7371	95%	354	5%	241.572	2.75
Enrollment	88						
Possible Days	45250						

# CONNECTIONS PROGRAM @OAZ8 An overall goal of the CONNECTIONS Program is to help students connect what they learn in class to the world outside - to make learning relevant. As a result of participation in our block program, students will be able to: Participate constructively as a member of a team, including making a contribution toward achieving goals and working-well-with others from diverse .... backgrounds. Use current technology, including computers, to process information and produce high quality products. Think critically, creatively and reflectively in making decisions and solving problems. Communicate through reading, writing, speaking and listening, and through an integrated use of visual form Develop a strong academic core and skills needed for future academic success. Develop an understanding of their strengths, interests and career aspirations. Understand how lifelong learning is an essential part of success.



## 95/96 CONNECTIONS COMPARISON

		9TH GRADE C	LASS-1ST QUA	RTER 1995			7447	
TOTALS		DAYS PRES	AVG PRES	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA	
School Days	43	23706	92%	1972	8%	1750.44	2.7	
Enrollment	649							
Possible Days	22678							
		CONNECTION	S-1ST QUARTE	R 1995				
TOTALS		DAYS PRES	AVG PRES	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA	
School Days	43	3983	96%	154	4%	298.7	3.07	
Enrollment	97							
Possible Days	22678							
		9TH GRADE C	LASS-1ST SEM	ESTER 1996				
TOTALS		DAYS PRES	AVG PRES	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA	
School Days	89	48097	92%	4332	8%	1760.74	2.84	
Enrollment	666							
Possible Days	52429							
		CONNECTIONS	S-1ST SEMESTI	ER 1996				
TOTALS		DAYS PRES	AVG PRES	DAYS ABS	AVG ABS	GPA	AVG GPA	
School Days	89	8217	96%	382	4%	285.05	2.93	
Enrollment	97							
Possible Days	52429							

8 th Grade Parents and Students From: The WHS Connections Team

Date: April 27,1997

Re: Connections Program

Congratulations! Your student has been selected to participate in the Connections Program at Wenatchee High School next year. The 120 students selected for the program will be scheduled into the following classes within the block: Freshman English, Keyboarding, Applied Math or Algebra 1, and Intro to Science. These classes will be scheduled during periods 1 through 4, leaving the afternoon clear for PE and other electives.

Unique elements of the Connections Program that will benefit your student:

- \* Integrated Curriculum
- \* School to Work focus through job shadowing experiences
- \* Assists students with transition from 8th grade to high school
- \* Community Service
- \* Team Teaching

The Connections Team would like to invite you to a meeting to explain the program and answer your questions.

## Thursday May 15 7pm Room 300 Wenatchee High School

We look forward to seeing you on May 15th.

Connections Team:

English:

Dave Carlson

Intro to Science:

Gloria Reichmann

Keyboarding:

Bob Long

Applied Math/ Algebra 1: Ted Van Bronkhorst

# APPENDIX B Survey Instrument

Dear Parent,

Your child has been selected to participate in a research study. Graduate students from Central Washington University are conducting research on Wenatchee High School's Connections program that your son/daughter has been involved in. Your child's participation would consist of filling out a questionnaire and one brief interview concerning the Connections program. We would also need permission to access grades. All the information we use in the study is strictly anonymous. The student's opinion and input are essential to the assessment of the program, and could aid in possible improvements as well. If there are any questions that we can address, please feel free to call Michael Mills at or Norlinda Connolly at Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Mills Norlinda Connolly

Yes, my son/daughter\_\_\_\_\_ may participate in this research study. Michael Mills and Norlinda Connolly have access to look at my son/daughter's grades.\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent's Signature)

NAME	
CLASS	

#### CONNECTIONS FRESHMAN BLOCK STUDENT SURVEY 1998

Circle the number which you feel reflects the most appropriate response.

1 strongly agree

2 agree

3 indifferent

4 disagree

5 strongly disagree

1. HAS THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM ASSISTED YOUR TRANSITION FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TO WHS?

1 2 3 4 5

2. IF YOU HAD A CHOICE, WOULD YOU CHOOSE THE CONNECTIONS
PROGRAM AGAIN FOR 9TH GRADE?

1 2 3 4 5

3. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS PROGRAM TO AN INCOMING 9TH GRADE STUDENT AT WHS?

1 2 3 4 5

4. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CONNECTIONS OFFERED IN 10TH GRADE?

1 2 3 4 5

5.	DO YOU FIND THE JOB S	SHADO	)WS	TO	BE	OF N	MUCH VALUE TO YOU?
		1	2	3	4	5	
:							
6.	DO YOU FIND IT HELPF	UL TO	KN	ow	TH	AT Y	OU HAVE FOUR
	TEACHERS WHO KNOW	YOU '	WE	LL?			
		1	2	3	4	5	
7.	HAVE YOU BENEFITTEI	D FRO	M T	HE	COI	MMU	NITY SERVICE ASPECT
	OF THE CONNECTIONS	PROG	RAI	<b>M?</b>			
		1	2	3	4	5	
8.	WOULD YOU LIKE TO S	EE MO	RE	PR	OJE	CTS	IN CONNECTIONS?
		1	2	3	4	5	
9.	WHAT KIND OF CHANG	es w	OUI	LD Y	<b>OU</b>	REC	OMMEND TO BENEFIT
	THE CONNECTIONS PR	OGRA	M?				

10. WHAT ARE THE ASPECTS OF THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM THAT YOU LIKE MOST?

APPENDIX C Survey Data

### DATA FROM CONNECTIONS FRESHMAN BLOCK STUDENT SURVEYS

Freshman Survey Group 18 responses total at 6-1-98

1. Has the Connections program assisted your transition from Middle School to WHS?

Strongly agree- (2 responses)

agree- (12 responses)

indifferent- (3 responses)

disagree- (1 response)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

2. If you had a choice, would you choose the Connections program again for the 9th Grade?

Strongly agree- (5 responses)

agree- (9 responses)

indifferent- (3 responses)

disagree- (1 response)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

3. Would recommend this program to an incoming 9th Grade student at WHS?

Strongly agree- (7 responses)

agree- (7 responses)

indifferent- (2 responses)

disagree- (2 responses)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

4. Would you like to see Connections program offered in 10th Grade?

Strongly agree- (2 responses)

agree- (3 responses)

indifferent- (9 responses)

disagree- (4 responses)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

5. Do you find the job shadows to be of much value to you?

Strongly agree- (7 responses)

agree- (4 responses)

indifferent- (3 responses)

disagree- (3 responses)

strongly disagree- (1 response)

6. Do you find it helpful to know that you have four teachers who know you well?

Strongly agree- (7 responses)

agree- (4 responses)

indifferent- (5 responses)

disagree- (1 response)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

Have you benefited from the Community Service aspect of the Connections Program?

> Strongly agree- (2 responses) agree- (8 responses) indifferent- (6 responses) disagree- (1 response) strongly disagree- (1 response)

8. Would you like to see more projects in the Connections Program?

> Strongly agree- (7 responses) agree- (2 responses) indifferent- (4 responses) disagree- (2 responses) strongly disagree- (3 responses)

- 9. What kind of changes would you recommend to benefit the Connections Program? Changes suggested:
- \* To have equal workload as other regular 9th Grade Science classes. Students felt that they have much more workload in Science in the Connections Program compared to other regular 9th Grade Science classes. 5 students stated this.
- \*To have more adequate facility to carry out activities such as debates. Reference was specifically made to the LGI auditorium where the debates were carried out, was not equipped with the microphone system. 2 students noted this.
- \*For staff to provide more help when necessary.
- \*To eliminate the job shadows. 2 responded as such.
- \*To provide more large group activities.
- \*To give students the freedom to choose topics for the Debates and Projects.
- \*To plan more field trips.
- What are the aspects of the Connections Program that you like most? 10. Having more time to work on Projects in 4 different classes because of the block schedule- (6 responses) Camaraderie, knowing everyone in the program- (2 responses)

Having the same teachers who work together as a team- (6 responses)

Job shadows- (5 responses)

Community services- (4 responses)

Debates- (1 response)

## DATA FROM CONNECTIONS FRESHMAN BLOCK STUDENT SURVEYS

Junior Survey Group 16 responses total at 6-1-98

1. Has the Connections program assisted your transition from Middle School to WHS?

Strongly agree- (2 responses)

agree- (6 responses)

indifferent- (7 responses)

disagree- (1 response)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

2. If you had a choice, would you choose the Connections program again for the 9th Grade?

Strongly agree- (5 responses)

agree- (4 responses)

indifferent- (4 responses)

disagree- (3 response)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

3. Would recommend this program to an incoming 9th Grade student at WHS?

Strongly agree- (5 responses)

agree- (6 responses)

indifferent- (3 responses)

disagree- (2 responses)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

4. Would you like to see Connections program offered in 10th Grade?

Strongly agree- (4 responses)

agree- (2 responses)

indifferent- (3 responses)

disagree- (7 responses)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

5. Do you find the job shadows to be of much value to you?

Strongly agree- (9 responses)

agree- (4 responses)

indifferent- (1 responses)

disagree- (2 responses)

strongly disagree- (0 response)

6. Do you find it helpful to know that you have four teachers who know you well?

Strongly agree- (10 responses)

agree- (3 responses)

indifferent- (3 responses)

disagree- (0 response)

strongly disagree- (1 response)