



# Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Shelley Mann

SCHOOL: Walla Walla High School

Position: Sign Language Teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 13 years

Q. How did Wa-Hi's Sign Language Program get started?

A. American Sign Language at WWHS started in the year 2000 when it was adopted as a Career & Technology Education curriculum across the state of Washington. We started the program with one class the first year. Then each year we added a class. I have three sections of first year students and two sections of second year students. It has grown over the last 13 years. When I first started in Walla Walla, there were only seven sign language teachers across the state; now there are about 77 teachers.

Q. Why does ASL appeal to so many students?

A. Kids will come to me and say Spanish is difficult for them because it is learning a new vocabulary. ASL requires students to manipulate English. ASL requires them to learn the signs for the English words they already know. So it is not quite as drastic as learning a traditional foreign language. The curriculum is still rigorous and the grammar is still very different.

Q. Does ASL meet college entrance requirements?

A. Yes. If a student takes two consecutive years of ASL, it meets the foreign language college entry requirement. One year counts as a CTE credit at Wa-Hi. There are colleges all across the country, from MIT and Harvard on the east coast, to all the California and Washington schools, which honor ASL as a foreign language.

Q. Why do you have so much passion for the Key Club as its advisor?

A. The Key Club kids are often involved in many school activities. My role is to simply supervise. They develop and carry out the activities. Community service is important and is part of their graduation requirement. This provides a venue to meet those requirements.

Over

**MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM  
SHELLEY'S CLASS:**



**COMMENTS FROM SHELLEY...**

The textbooks we use are college accredited so I am articulated with Spokane Falls Community College. The students can receive up to five credits per year if they attend Spokane Falls Community College and test out.

I began teaching in 1973. I graduated from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I started teaching at the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs, Iowa.



I have a broad background in teaching ASL. I went from Iowa to Arizona, to California, Atlanta, Georgia, and then came here. I love helping kids and teaching something I am passionate about.