

Come, Watson, come! Mrs. Carlisle cried. The game is afoot... in 221b of Moore Elementary!

**2015 Jan Stauber Grant Final Report
Shannon Carlisle, Accelerated Learning Teacher
and Chief Sherlockian of Moore Elementary, Franklin, TN**

During 2015-2016 school year, the introduction and study of Sherlock Holmes' character traits, observational skills, reasoning, and adventures were enhanced because my Jan Stauber grant proposal was fully funded. The funds were used to enrich units currently being taught and support the development of new ones. Thirty-seven kindergarten, first, third, and fourth grade accelerated learning literacy students benefitted from the grant funds this year. Additionally, year after year, Moore Elementary students will continue to benefit from the funding of this grant because non-consumable teaching/learning materials were purchased. As always, I am very grateful for The Beacon Society's support.

Enhancing units currently being taught

“The Character Traits of Sherlock Holmes for the Younger Elementary Student” unit for 5 kindergarten and 9 first grade students- an opportunity to analyze and appreciate Sherlock Holmes' character traits; an opportunity to analyze historical fiction for key words, characters' and readers' feelings, key ideas, and images/symbols and to identify problems/solutions

Every December, I read Sherlock Holmes and the Missing Snowman, by David Ruffle and Rikey Austin, to my kindergarten and first grade students. The book allows me to introduce students to Sherlock Holmes and his character's traits. In the story, a little girl has just moved from India to London and the snowman she builds during her first snowfall has disappeared. Although Dr. Watson wants to tell the girl that her snowman has melted, Sherlock Holmes helps the little girl investigate the “disappearance.” Before this school year, I had one copy of the book. With grant funds, I purchased 10 additional copies. This year, the students could read and reread the text on their own as needed to complete the learning activities.

During the unit, the kindergarten students identified Sherlock Holmes' character traits and provided textual evidence to support their thinking in a class created paragraph (documentation #1). Then, the students identified words to describe themselves and wrote paragraphs highlighting their characteristics (documentation #2). The 1st grade students completed the literature web developed for The College of William and Mary literature units for advanced learners (identifying key words, characters' and readers' feelings, key ideas, and images/symbols- documentation #3). They also identified the problems/solutions in the text (documentation #4).

“The Sherlock Holmes Museum for the Young, Curious, and Observant Mind” unit for 10 fourth graders- an opportunity to analyze informational texts, compose interpretive labels for a specific purpose and audience, and appreciate Sherlockiana

During the 2014-2015 school year, the fourth grade students converted an area of our classroom into “The Sherlock Holmes Museum for The Young, Curious, and Observant Mind.” The students researched Sherlockiana and composed interpretive labels for the artifacts that had been donated to our classroom. In May of 2015, my students participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the museum’s opening. Since the museum was dedicated to Dr. Marino Alvarez and Mrs. Francine Kitts, they were special guests for the event (Mrs. Kitts participated remotely using Skype).

Identifying reliable sources of information, during the research phase, had been difficult. Therefore, with grant funds, I purchased The e-Baker Street Journal Version 2 PDF Archive 1946-2011 so this year’s fourth graders would have reliable sources of information to refer to while completing their museum research. The students used the e-Baker Street Journal to complete research for the following topics- canonical Baker Street Irregulars, U.S.A. Baker Street Irregulars, canonical villains, and forms of communication found in the canon.

I am always astonished by the Sherlockian research that has been completed. When two students mentioned they were interested in researching Holmes and his communication methods, my initial thought was that this would finally be a unique area of research. However, when the students reviewed the back issues of the journal, they found multiple articles on the subject.

On May 19, 2016, the students took Dr. Alvarez on a tour of the museum (documentation #5, 6, and 7). They introduced him to the new artifacts and their interpretive labels. They also introduced him to a new section of the museum- Singular Sherlockians. This new section will recognize distinguished Sherlockians. This year, Al Gregory was interviewed and his biography can be found in this new feature of the museum (documentation #8 and 9).

Developing new units

“The Redheaded League” unit for 13 third graders- an opportunity to analyze historical fiction for key words, characters’ and readers’ feelings, key ideas, and images/symbols and to appreciate the popular adventure

Before this year, I introduced “The Redheaded League” to my fourth graders using Classic Starts: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. This abridged version of the adventure is too advanced for my third graders. Therefore, with grant funds, I purchased 13 copies of the graphic novel, On the Case with Holmes and Watson #7: Sherlock Holmes and the Redheaded League, by Murray Shaw and M.J. Cosson. Now, the students will participate in a two-year study of the adventure by reading the graphic novel in 3rd grade and the Classic Starts version in 4th grade.

Before I introduced this year's 4th graders to the Classic Starts version, I let them read the graphic novel. Then, they created a visual literacy task to help the 3rd graders learn about the setting (adapted from tasks developed by Dr. Alvarez). The task required the 3rd graders to "observe" a photo of Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill circa 1890 (documentation #10 and 11). As another pre-reading activity, the students were introduced to the word "dissolve" and had to use it in a sentence and include it in an analogy (documentation #12).

During the introduction to the adventure, the graphic novel states "Sherlock Holmes and his helpful friend Dr. John Watson are fictional characters created by British writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle." When the students read this line, they all gasped. They know that Holmes and Watson live!

After reading the graphic novel, the students completed a literature web developed for The College of William and Mary literature units for advanced learners (identifying key words, characters' and readers' feelings, key ideas, and images/symbols- documentation #13).

"The Sherlock Files" unit for 13 third graders (Please note- My grant proposal identified this unit to be taught to 2nd and 3rd graders. However, my 2015-2016 teaching schedule did not allow for me to use this unit with 2nd graders.)- an opportunity to analyze realistic fiction texts for key words, characters' and readers' feelings, key ideas, and images/symbols while learning more about the great detective through his great-great-great grandchildren☺

Although I teach advanced literacy students, they are not able to access the canon as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote it. Not only is the vocabulary too advanced, but also some of the content is inappropriate for 5 to 10-year-olds. Over the past five years, I have seen the value in introducing Sherlock Holmes' character traits, observational skills, reasoning, and adventures to elementary students. Therefore, I rely on abridged editions, pastiches, and graphic novels. In The Sherlock Files, a series of pastiches written by Tracy Barrett, Americans Xena and Xander Holmes think moving to London will be boring. However, soon after their arrival, they discover they are the great-great-great grandchildren of Sherlock Holmes and inherit his unsolved casebook. These children are observant and have fine powers of reasoning... like their well-known ancestor. The plots are dotted with references to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories. Therefore, with grant funds, I purchased 10 copies of book #1, The 100-Year-Old-Secret. Additionally, with grant funds, I purchased four copies each of books #2-4- Beast of Blackslope, The Case That Time Forgot, and The Missing Heir.

As a pre-reading activity for The 100-Year-Old-Secret, the students played "Fake It or Define It." During the vocabulary game, each student tried to deceive her/his peers by sharing 3 definitions for an unknown word from the novel. Two of the definitions were fake. The class had to determine which definition was real! After reading the novel, the students completed the literature web developed for The College of William and Mary literature units for advanced

learners (identifying key words, characters' and readers' feelings, key ideas, and images/symbols- documentation #14).

The students enjoyed the first novel so much they couldn't wait to read the others, in small groups, as I had planned. They check out and read the other 15 copies on their own. The class created a club, The Society for the Preservation of Famous Detectives club, for those who read all 4 novels. By the end of the school year, 8 students had become members. The students appreciated Tracy Barrett's novels so much they helped me nominate her for The Beacon Award. And finally, several students wrote poems inspired by her characters. They performed their poetry at the Cool Cat Café- a poetry reading venue at Moore Elementary School's Family Reading Night. Tracy Barrett, who lives here locally, was invited to attend the event. She was not able to attend. We recorded the student performances and sent them to her electronically. It has been recommended, to our school's advisory board, that Mrs. Barrett be a visiting author next school year mentoring our students with their narrative writing.