

Jan Stauber Grant Report

Jill Altman, Saluda Primary School

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Description of completed project:

We started our reading club “SPS Sleuths” by pulling the top readers from two classes at a time for a two week session. Students came to me every day for two weeks for 45 minute sessions and we did deductive reasoning activities, short mystery puzzles, read our Sherlock Holmes stories, learned about fingerprinting, and had great discussions. I purchased each student a small notebook where they wrote down new vocabulary from the stories and our other activities. Our culminating event was to have the district resource officer visit our group to give a demonstration of fingerprinting. He set up an entire crime scene and the students had to use all the skills we discussed during the week before to figure out who “broke” into the library. I’m still cleaning up fingerprint powder. They loved it!



(The Crime Scene)

Goals that were achieved:

Our goals were:

- To introduce elementary students to the genre of mysteries, forensics, and logical thinking using the Sherlock Holmes stories.
- To improve students' deductive reasoning skills.
- To improve reading interest and encourage curiosity.

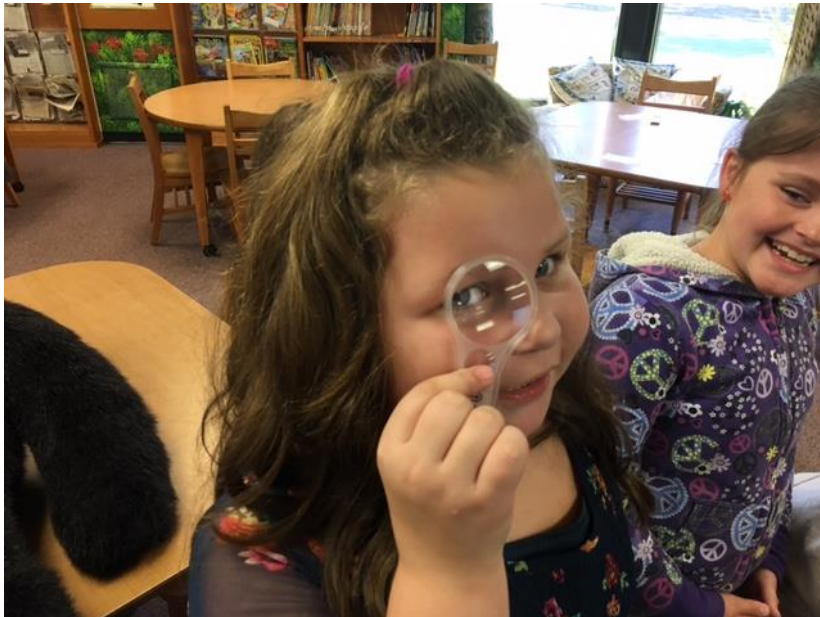
I think we clearly achieved our goals this year. The students loved learning about mysteries and the teachers reported a distinct new interest in the whole mystery genre in their classrooms. I had many more mysteries checked out this year from our chapter book collection than in past years. My principal and teachers were so pleased with the reading club we were able to continue through the rest of the year rotating groups through three more sessions: another mystery reading, a Lego problem solving session, and a freestyle Lego club. A district person heard about our group and secured funds to purchase several more Lego sets and science books. Lots of kids not in my reading groups were affected when students shared their experience with them. I had a lot of spill-over interest in mysteries and many students tried to impress me with their deductions. This program also helped with book returns. I had a much higher rate of book returns this year and I attribute that to an increase in the enjoyment of reading. Kids want to read their books, they want to get new ones and thus, they take better care of their books and return them on time.

The project's impact on the grantee, the school or organization, and the participants:

Sixty second grade students took part in the book and Lego club. This project was great for me and my students. One thing that affected the library was I finally took a hard look at my chapter book collection and performed some much needed weeding and reorganizing. My students were exposed to a whole new genre of books and every one of them told me they enjoyed it. The project allowed me to forge a stronger bond with some of my students and that has spilled over into other projects at school. Spending more time with these students has made them more trusting of me and more willing to seek me out when they are doing research projects for their regular classes. I'm constantly trying to connect students with books so once they got an in depth study of Sherlock Holmes and found out they liked it they've been more willing to try other books I recommend. We were awarded another grant this year for classroom libraries and I was put in charge of selecting the books. I had several teachers request that I include lots of beginner mysteries because their students requested them. Their interest has caused other students to be interested and many of them are asking how they can get involved in our "club." We are hoping it will be a motivator for those students on the "edge" of reading on grade level. This seems to be working since every rotation of the club saw a few more students qualifying to join.

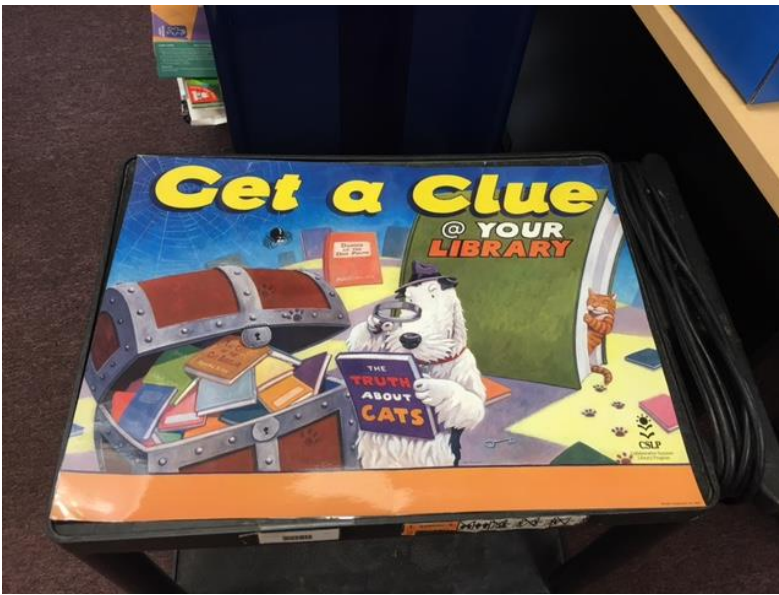


Students fill out fingerprint and evidence cards.

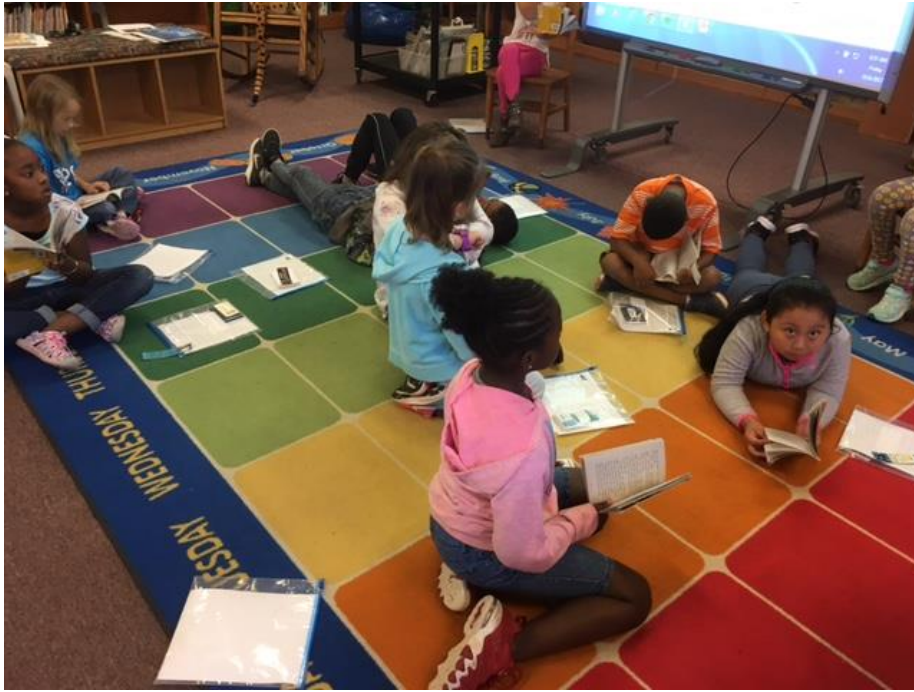




Studying the crime scene.



Display



Reading Sherlock.



Other books from the Jan Stauber grant!