

It's never too early to learn about Sherlock Holmes. Matthew Stark, a Jan Stauber Grant 2010 winner, teaches Grades 2-8

JAN STAUBER GRANT 2010 FINAL REPORT

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Our project asked students to write a story based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**, then turn their story into a short radio script, and record it as a podcast. The goal of the project was to have a completed podcast about a mystery that included the students in the story. The students were being introduced to the genre of mysteries and how to use computer audio editing software.

The students read the stories of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and "The Redheaded League" from the book **Classic Starts: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**. The students then had a chance to read some of the rest of the stories in the book on their own. These stories included "A Scandal in Bohemia," "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," "The Greek Interpreter," and "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons." When the students read these stories, they were introduced to the elements of mystery writing. They also learned about the historical time period when the stories took place. The students also had to learn many new vocabulary words while reading the stories.

When the students began the project, they had three goals in mind: to read a new story, to create a podcast, and to write their own story. When the project got under way, they developed some new goals. These new goals included learning new vocabulary words, finding how people lived and worked during the time of Sherlock Holmes, and relating those stories to their own lives.

The students spent a few weeks becoming familiar with the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and how to come up with a good mystery. Students learned how to make sure they not only had a story but something that could be solved. They needed to give clues along the way in order to help the reader solve the mystery. They also tried to give the reader reassurance at the end about why the mystery was solved the way it was solved. The students spent time writing, editing, and revising their own stories. Then students spent time recording themselves telling their stories.

For many of the students, this was the first time they had read a mystery, let alone a Sherlock Holmes story. They were not aware of Sherlock Holmes and how he figured out and used clues to solve a mystery. The students were also not aware of how to write a mystery. This project had a great effect on the students because it gave them a chance to not only write a story but also record themselves. Many of the students started out very unsure they could write a story or record themselves. As the project got underway they gained confidence in their abilities as writers. The students saw that writing was something they could continue to do in the future.

The grant has given students at Maudrey J. Sommer School in Tanana the ability to complete a project that they would not had been able to complete without the help of the funds provided by the Beacon Society. The grantee also gave our rural students the ability to see that is possible for them to complete a goal that they set out for themselves. This grant has enabled the school to see that technology can enhance a student's ability to read and write. This grant has been very valuable to the students and staff at our school.

This project also had a major effect on the grantee and the school. The grantee showed the school how it could incorporate technology and reading in the classroom. This grant also gave the grantee an idea of how he could accomplish a project of this size. His abilities to manage students and to teach fiction writing were improved by being forced to make sure that he accomplished all the goals of the project. The grantee also had to make sure to stay organized and also manage students using computers. The students gained in self-confidence, and the grantee gained self-confidence in teaching. The grantee was also given some insight into the lives of the students, by discussing ways for the students to make the stories more personal.