

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
ACTION RESEARCH REPORT
2006 / 2007

Writing Wizards Peer Mentoring Online Project

Writing Wizards Peer Mentoring Online Project

Submitted by Cheryl Andres (Dr. F. D. Sinclair)

ACTION RESEARCH TEAM:

Dr. F.D. Sinclair: Marilyn Macdougall, David Hovis, Heather Robinson, Lorraine Williams, Heather Reid, Maureen McDonough, Graham Allison, Cheryl Andres

Frost Road: Eric Andres, Rick Clark, Kerry Schwab

Princess Margaret: Maggie Lee

CONTEXT:

Dr. Sinclair is a large inner city school in the Newton area of Surrey with a high ESL population. Our school goal is the improvement of reading and writing. In 2006/07 the staff continued to upgrade technological knowledge and skills, increasing student use of our mobile lab.

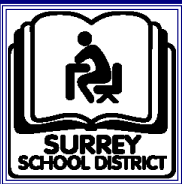
RESEARCH QUESTION:

How will curricular integration of Language Arts, Fine Arts and technology impact the writing of low output grade 4-7 boys doing an online mentorship project?

ACTION:

As a group, we agreed to collect data by doing teacher and student surveys and two school writes. We also used the Grade 4-7 Ministry of Education Performance Standards for Writing and the new Surrey District Student Capacities for Technology. Incorporating Write Traits lessons with student rubrics, we were mindful of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences to reach all learners. Student and teacher communication, collaboration and mentorship occurred mostly on Surrey Net. Teachers attended workshops given by Diana Cruchley and Barry Macdonald on strategies for teaching boys. Kevin Amboe, ICT Helping Teacher, taught us about the features of First Class and how to make iMovies. We paired up classes so that students could regularly give each other feedback on their writing. Some students downloaded First Class at home so they could share their work with parents.

A "student experts in technology" leadership group was formed. They attended workshops and helped classmates create and convert original scripts using multimedia. Concluding the project with The Poets' Tea helped to get mentors and mentees together to celebrate and share their newly gained technological and writing products.



LEADERSHIP ACADEMY ACTION RESEARCH REPORT 2006 / 2007

Writing Wizards Peer Mentoring Online Project

HOW DID IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The “student technology expert group” helped other classes to use technology responsibly, to give feedback online, and to create scripts for interviews and iMovies. We:

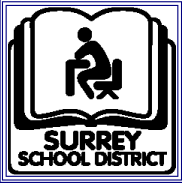
- created an online professional learning community of 300 students and their teachers.
- used diverse strategies to meet diverse needs and closed the achievement gap.
- conducted interviews with primary buddies, hooking the older students into using technology and Write Traits.
- developed skills and common language for students and staff.
- showed student work at district ICT meetings and motivated other teachers.
- trained the grade 7's to become future secondary mentors.

KEY FINDINGS:

Boys are extremely motivated by technology. Student mentorship created an online community, simultaneously increasing literacy and technology skills. Three additional teachers in each computer class made hands-on help readily available. Use of student leaders enhanced self-esteem and built responsible behaviour. This broad based project helped classes adopt a common assessment language and use common resources and strategies. Teachers noted a positive effect on student engagement.

Profile of the typical low written output boy surveyed in grade 4 to 7

- likes computers to surf the net, research
- communicates with friends face to face, on the phone or uses MSN
- reads magazines, comics and picture books usually
- enjoys poetry, drama and writing short paragraphs
- would like the school to buy cameras and video equipment
- would like to do a report on the computer



**LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
ACTION RESEARCH REPORT
2006 / 2007**

Writing Wizards Peer Mentoring Online Project

Teacher Survey

Prior to implementation, teachers in the online project were surveyed as a planning tool.

The survey indicated that:

- Language Arts writing programs included a blend of the Writing Process, Writers' Workshop, Write Traits Program and curricular integration.
- 60% of the students were familiar with the Performance Standards for Writing.
- Writing time given in class ranged from 45 minutes a day to 40 minutes a week. The computer lab was used from 30 to 100 minutes weekly with the mobile lab use ranging from 0 to 180 minutes.
- 40% of the students used a typing program and 30% were familiar with Inspiration software.
- 20% of students had used a digital or a video camera.
- 50% of students were able to use the right tool to create a presentation of mixed text and graphics.
- 80% of students had First Class accounts and had used these FC features: 10% chat, 50% email, 0% voice, 60% folders, 30% conferences, 20% multimedia.

Boys written output (grade 4-7 sample)

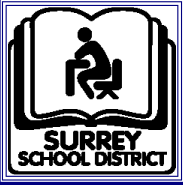
| | <u>Fall 2006</u> | <u>Spring 2007</u> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Not Yet Within expectations | 11 | 3 |
| Not Yet Within to Minimally Meeting | 0 | 3 |
| Minimally Meeting | 19 | 14 |
| Minimally Meeting to Fully Meeting | 0 | 3 |
| Fully Meeting | 0 | 7 |

INTERPRETATION:

The multiple intelligences and technology slants targeted the range of student learning styles that encourage more effort in writing and revisions. Students saw the errors in their own writing more readily through using the Performance Standards for communication about writing. Increased self-esteem decreased inappropriate behaviour in the peer group.

WHAT WAS LEARNED ABOUT LEADERSHIP FROM THIS PROJECT?

Students teaching students is 100% learning. Students loved to help and to celebrate each other's work. Teacher partnerships can help in getting people on board.



**LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
ACTION RESEARCH REPORT
2006 / 2007**

Writing Wizards Peer Mentoring Online Project

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT?

- Open classroom ports in schools so teachers can use mobile labs.
- Encourage in-school tech workshops with district staff.
- Establish district “student tech expert” groups to give school workshops.
- Continue to upgrade old labs to mobile ones.

FOR SCHOOLS?

- Provide low output students with daily access to laptops.
- Use e-portfolio samples to encourage home/school sharing of student work.
- Adopt diverse strategies to meet diverse student needs, consistently and continuously.