

## **PDIG Report 2018-2019**

### **Students as Authors**

#### **Project Description**

The project was carried out with some modifications. Two teachers were unable to continue their participation in the project after the initial face-to-face sessions because of medical leave and change in assignment. The lack of substitution teachers available prevented some teachers from taking the available release time, therefore some funding remains in the substitution budget.

Before meeting, teachers completed a short survey concerning their experience with writing workshop in order to direct the two days of workshop. Two separate initial face-to-face sessions were organized so that travel costs could be minimized. One was held on the Gaspé Coast and the other on the North Shore. The format for both sessions was the same. The morning session started with looking at the why and how a writer's workshop framework could meet the needs of students in multi-level classrooms. We looked at how the framework would look in our classrooms and an overview of the basic components of the framework. From the survey, that was sent out to teacher's before the workshop, we decided to focus on mini-lessons, the writing process, and writer's notebook. In the afternoon, teachers worked collaboratively. The teachers examined writing samples from their students and started planning for mini-lessons in response to the needs of their students. The morning session started with discussion of goal-setting, peer-conferencing, student-teacher conferencing. We examined videos, specifically from Jennifer Serravallo, on the importance of goal-setting and conferencing strategies for teacher-student conferences. In the second part of the morning session, we worked with *Patterns of Power* by Jeff Anderson, discussed the approach, and examined videos for ideas of how this approach may look in the classroom. Once again, in the afternoon the teachers worked collaboratively, using their student samples of writing. The focus of the conversation was formative assessment and responsive teaching.

As followup, teachers met individually with the ELA Consultant. Questions and concerns were addressed about implementation. Together a writing lesson was planned and then the ELA Consultant modeled in class. Teachers were introduced to the *Writing Conventions Continua* from Lynn Senecal and student writing samples were examined through this lens. Some teachers were able to work with the ELA Consultant for a second day. For this session the consultant and teacher focussed on writing conferences and examined Carl Anderson's *A Teacher's Guide to Writing Conferences*.

#### **Project Goals**

Overall the goals of this project were met. Time was provided for teachers to meet, discuss and work collaboratively through the face-to-face sessions. This is especially important at ESSB because of the vast territory of our board. Connections were made between

teachers from different schools who face similar challenges of multi-grade classes. Providing resources to teachers was also a priority. Through other sources of funding, the teachers involved in the project received several writing resources; Patterns of Power by Jeff Anderson, Writing Well by Ruth Culham, The Write Genre by Lori Rog Jamison and A Teacher's Guide to Writing Conferences by Carl Anderson. Also, a shared Google folder has been created to share resources amongst the participants and other interested teachers.

The importance of collaboration amongst teachers and release time to do this work cannot be overstated. This is especially true for teachers who live in isolated communities such as Fermont and the Magdalen Islands, where PD opportunities are often restricted because of travel expenses.

## **Project Outcomes**

Gains in teachers' expertise were self-assessed. At the initial workshop, teachers were asked to keep a journal. Some of the positive comments from teachers were; my students wrote more this year than in any other year, my students were more engaged with their writing this year, my students appreciated that they had more choice about their writing. Teachers also appreciated the developmental continuaa from Lynn Senecal. With these continuaa, teachers were able to target specific areas to work on with students in terms of spelling and conventions of writing.

## **Reinvestment**

The annual report submitted by the ELA Consultant to PACTE, will contain the link for the shared folder of created resources. At the ESSB Marking Center on June 17th, the findings of the project will be presented to grade 6 teachers. Access to the shared folder of resources will be given to interested teachers. The PDIG, Students as Authors Phase 2, has been accepted. The teachers who have chosen to continue with the project will partner with another teacher in their respective schools, thus building capacity at the school level.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/18FGBAjYulcNiPZkoVtung3fxhbm1fXIB>