



## 2013-2014 AESN Case Study

**School:** James Ardiel Elementary    **District:** SD36 Surrey

**Area of focus:** Enhancement Agreement

**Inquiry Team Members:** Iram Khan, Donna While, Sandy Nazarchuk, Rae King, Raman Kathuria

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**Question / focus area:** Does writing for a global audience through blogging and connecting with published authors improve student writing (meaning, style, form, conventions)?

**Scanning:** Looking at last years writing data we discovered that 49% of our students are not fully meeting expectations in writing (51% of our Aboriginal students). We also completed a survey this year and found that 30% of our grade 7 and 10% of our grade 4 students did not like to write for personal and/or academic reasons.

**Focus:** The key area of our focus was to improve writing. This evolved from focusing on improving writing conventions to improving the perceptions of our students' opinions towards writing. We believe that if students write more and for a global authentic audience, their perceptions towards writing, writing style and conventions of writing will improve.

**Hunch:** Our hunch was that because students are often required to write for school assignments and often under limitations set by the teacher for a limited, often inauthentic audience, that many students begin to not enjoy writing. Even though technology has increased options and engagement for students, we are still finding that due to limited equipment, lack of experience and efficiency, writing on paper is very common in classes.

**New professional learning:** Learning how to blog and maneuver through the learning curve involved in learning and introducing new technology was immense. Introducing blogging to our students seemed like a simple enough task, but we found that it opened more doors for important pre-loading. Not only did we have to learn and teach the basic technicalities of blogging, but we also had to work through digital citizenship and online safety.

**Taking action:** We decided to work through the grade 7 classes first, since they were more experienced with technology. We moved forward, reflected with our students and as a team, backtracked many times and then moved forward again. Coming back to the

spirals of inquiry and reflecting on each step helped guide us through this process. We also learned that it was okay when things weren't going well and most importantly our students learned that it was okay to make mistakes, learn from them and move forward.

**Checking:** We have been able to see through anecdotal comments and the blog posts themselves that the perceptions towards writing have definitely changed. Connecting to Aboriginal authors through an online program gave students motivation and real life stories of how much perseverance is needed to be a published author.

Here is a video to summarize our process and what the students and team thought about the project.

[http://prezi.com/xuta-ljmtttf/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/xuta-ljmtttf/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)

**Reflections/Advice:** The team is very excited to hit the ground running next year. With all the technical hurdles dealt with, teachers will now be more confident with introducing blogging to their students. We know that our students enjoyed writing for a larger, authentic audience and it did motivate them to write more. Our advice to other schools is that it is okay to take it slow and make sure all the steps in the spiral are worked through and reflected on.