

## 2012-2013 Inquiry Case Study



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**School Name: John Barsby Community School**

**District: #68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith**

**Inquiry Team Members: Deborah Keenleyside, Star Faux, Tad Davis, Deborah Marshall, Kathryn Goldsmith, Wayne Cooper**

**Question/Focus:** How can we use UDL practices to improve academic achievement for all students?

### **Scanning**

Our project involved the grade 8 linear English/Socials class. These learners have trouble with reading traditional texts and written output. Many of the students require adaptations with the presentation of material and with representations of their learning. There are a variety of reasons for the need for adaptation, such as identified learning disabilities, slow processing times and significant weaknesses in basic skill development. Traditional paper and pencil tasks can be onerous for many of them. Many of the students in this class appear disengaged with their learning.

### **Focus**

Our project examined using UDL practices, specifically laptops and Kurzweil, to support improvement in student learning and students' engagement with their learning.

### **Hunch**

Our thinking was that the use of UDL practices would provide students with improved ways to access learning materials and alternative ways to accurately represent their learning. It is also thought that the use of UDL practices would allow students to access their learning more easily which and lead to increased engagement with their own learning.

### **New professional learning**

The classroom teacher, EA and district instructional coordinator were trained in the use of Kurzweil. The classroom teacher learned how to use Voiki to record student self-assessments of their learning competencies. The classroom teacher and district instructional coordinator learned how to use iMovie as a means of student representation of their learning.

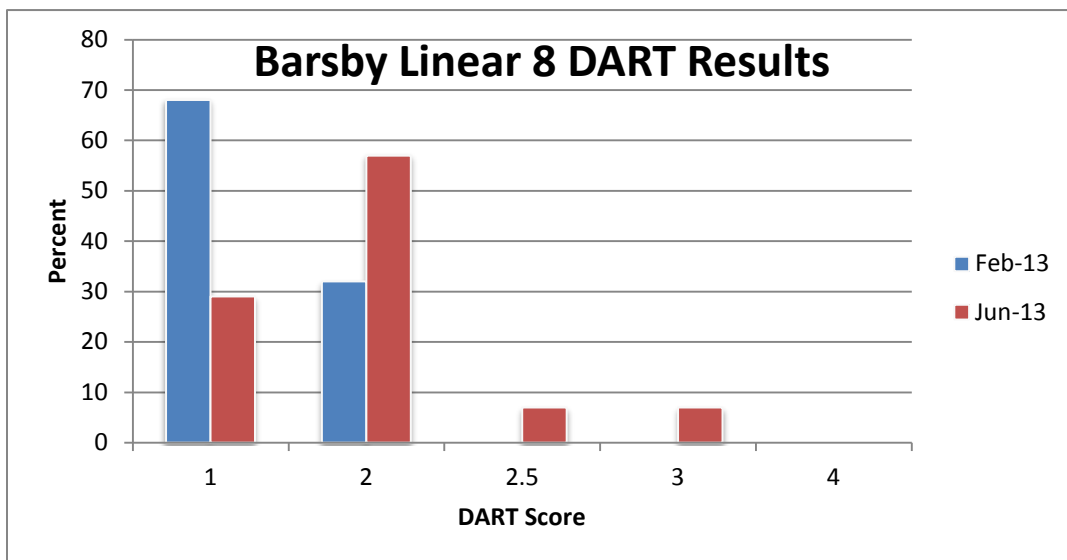
## Taking action

Technology was obtained through SET BC to provide the classroom with 8-10 laptops, two iMac desktop computers and various digital cameras. Kurzweil licenses were also obtained through SET BC for use by students to access course materials through the laptops. The classroom teacher was partnered with a district instructional coordinator for the purposes of team teaching many of the lessons and units to facilitate the development of UDL best practices within the classroom

## Checking

The use of the technology had an immediate impact. Many students were able to become independent in their learning. Students who needed adult support no longer needed the one-to-one support and many students who found written output difficult jumped ahead in their ability to represent their learning. One student in particular who would struggle significantly with reading and writing became a class leader in achievement when using the technology. The technology allowed students to represent their learning in a variety of ways as well, such as Power Point presentations, brochures/posters made with the laptops, and on-line sources such as Prezi.

The students were given the DART reading assessment in February and June and showed significant improvement as a class in their ability to read information texts.



## Reflections/Advice

Consistent tech support for this kind of project was crucial. This minimized down times and prevented teachers and students from becoming frustrated with unreliable technology. Having

two teachers and an EA during the implementation phase of the project also allowed us to keep the students moving forward during the learning curve and experience success from the beginning, which again kept them engaged in learning. The extra support in the classroom, also meant the lesson planning and teaching could be shared and made learning how to use the technology much easier. Providing teachers with the necessary in-service to learn how to use the technology was another important component for us in ensuring a successful project and should be included by any other group attempting a similar project.

Our hope is to add to this kind of technology in our school, so these students will continue to have access to technology to support their learning and build on the skills with this technology and programs like Kurzweil they have developed this year.

***EVERY learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options.***