

May 5, 2017

Fort Rupert Elementary K/1/2 SetBC-BC Classroom Suite Inquiry Final Report

Project Description and Concept- CS 5.1 will be incorporated as skill building for literary and math centres, as part of the Daily 5 and Math Daily 3 programs. Skill building will be targeted towards increased independent learning, increased reading levels and increased basic math skills within a differentiated learning environment. The anticipated outcomes were to increase student stamina, create independent learners, increase reading levels, increase basic math skills and be able to meet student needs through small group conferences. MacBook Air computers, Classroom Suite and Headsprout: Learning A to Z Reading, were the programs that were used in the classroom. Our learning assistance teacher, myself and my class E.A. were involved with the facilitation of this project.

Getting Started: Before we started using the computers students had to show 15-20 mins of reading, word work and math stamina. Our classes always start with going over our learning expectations, then we graph our stamina time and discuss how we did. Once students were able to consistently work independently or as a group for 15-20mins, which took about 2 months, we brought out the computers. We had very clear expectations for our computer use, if the expectations weren't followed then the student's computer would be taken away and they would have to wait until the next day to try again. We started off by using the creativity tools like painting and bookmaker. This was new to everyone in the classroom including the staff! Some students tried using the mouse at first and some used the pad. In the end we all preferred using the pad. The students loved figuring out the programs. We were all learning together and those that figured out how to use the programs quickly helped show other students how to paint, use stamps, and create picture stories. After students were savvy with using the pad on their own we introduced the Classroom Suite - Word Work program. Some had difficulties with dragging the letters/words to the columns in the beginning, but they all figured it out after the first 2 weeks. We used Classroom Suite for about 4 weeks and then switched to Headsprout: Learning A to Z. This program is more student/kid friendly and keeps the learning fun. It also mirrored the class home reading program. I found Classroom Suite - Word Work program to be a bit outdated and not user friendly for myself or my students. The Headsprout program is easy to use and provides a detailed breakdown of student learning outcomes.

I found the Math component (pre-made lessons) okay for the grade two's and higher level math students, but too challenging for my younger students. I did make individualized math learning bundles for my beginning math students, but overall this took too much time to prepare and was not engaging enough for my K's and 1's. My younger students much preferred to use Endless Math on the iPads or do small group work. We have recently been using Math Prodigy and the students love it! It is designed to be used for students grade 1 and up, but many of my kindergartens are able to answer the questions as it is towards the end of the year. Math Prodigy also emails me detailed weekly reports on how each student is doing in each assigned Math section.

Main Challenges: One of the main challenges was building stamina and independence with students that had behavioural struggles. Those students still needed 1 on 1 support. However, we found that if they had the one on one support for the first 5-10mins of the program, to set up, they were able to work independently for the remaining 10 mins. So really, for me to be able to

do the small group work we need to have both our learning assistance teacher and our class E.A. to be facilitating those on the computers. This could be challenging as sometimes our learning support teacher was needed elsewhere and I have had 4 different E.A.'s this year, so retraining was a constant throughout the year. To overcome this we just kept plugging along with some days more successful than others, but that is just how it goes sometimes.

Main Successes: Student reading abilities improved throughout the year. I was able to work with small groups and facilitate targeted lessons and learning, our goal of 20 mins of independent learning was achieved. Students were able to use technology to foster exploratory creativity!

Recommendations/Advice: Make sure you set clear expectations for the handling of computers and computer use, don't start until students have a clear understanding of classroom learning and behaviour expectations, think about other learning programs that you could use on your computers to facilitate learning, utilize existing programs on the MacBooks, and have fun!