



Research Brief

iPad Usage

Question: How can iPads be effectively used in the classroom?

In a Nutshell

The iPad is one of the latest technologies that has found its way into classrooms. Although research on its effectiveness is minimal, the literature provides a great deal of recommendations and resources for its successful use in schools.

Summary of Findings:

When computers first in the schools in the 1980s they seemed almost like toys. No one imagined the impact they would have on schools and schooling. In the past 30 years, technology has advanced so rapidly that many people struggle to stay up-to-date. The current generation of students, often referred to as Millennials, are part of a society where the use of technology is embraced as a useful tool for learning, productivity and nurturing relationships. This stimulates their ability to multitask and to expect quick answers to questions (Walker, 2006). In order to use best practices and meet the students' learning needs, meaningful use of technology is imperative. One of the latest technological tools available for classroom use is the iPad (Apple iPad, <http://www.apple.com/ipad/>).

Because it has only been available for a little more than a year, little research has been done on its effectiveness in the classroom and on learning. A pilot study in a Texas middle school found that at first students using the iPad in algebra scored lower on tests than did those who were not using the iPad. But after observing classrooms and speaking with students, the teacher found that the students thought that the iPad would give them the answers to problems. Based on this feedback, teachers adjusted their teaching and more regularly integrated the video clips that were developed by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, the publishers of the text and developer of the iPad applications for this course. They worked more individually with students while they were utilizing this technology. Once these changes were implemented, students using iPads scored as well as those who were not using iPads (Barseghian, 2011).

Although the research is incredibly limited about its educational benefits, the literature is filled with all types of kudos, suggestions and applications for the classroom. Some of the benefits noted include: it replaced textbooks; it lessened the use of paper; because of its flat design, students and teacher could still have eye contact; as of Jan 2011 there were 5,400 educational apps available and almost 1,000 of them were free; digital writing more appropriately matched the expectations of the world outside of school; test responses can be monitored "live"; it can be used instead of the clicker; and its battery life is ten hours (Creative Commons; Dodson, 2011; Heitin, 2011; Hu2011). One teacher stated that the iPad is "...basically the opposite of me (the teacher) fixing a student to a desk and telling him or her to look through a window. It opens up a whole new world for them and allows them to visualize different layers of virtual reality" (McCrea, 2011).



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Possible Classroom Applications

There are endless possibilities for use of the iPad in classrooms. The number of education “apps” increases daily. As iPads become more available teachers are developing even more uses in their classrooms. Some of the ideas suggested in the literature include the following:

- teach writing, peer editing, and responding;
 - model appropriate writing and respond “live;”
 - have stories read out loud so students can hear the language being spoken, especially if the reading is challenging, i.e. Shakespeare, Canterbury Tales, different dialogues and accents;
 - have students record their work then have them share it with their peers, especially good for acquisition of a foreign language;
 - use it to convert spoken language to written language;
 - have students write and “publish” their own books;
 - have students use graphic organizers and outlines and the students and teacher can write back and forth about the work
 - stream appropriate clips and videos (often supplied by the text publishing company, youtube, etc.) this way students can watch it as often as necessary;
 - have students respond to the video clip with a blog;
 - have students design presentations and use it to make them to the class;
 - use it for map reading ;
 - study national disasters, what caused them, what to do in case of them, how to avoid them;
 - practice math concepts and apply to real world situations;
 - access periodicals and newspapers for daily reading and discussion;
 - use pictures to promote discussion;
 - have students use their own pictures to help tell stories, write, respond ;
 - draw, paint and/or sketch ideas, concepts, etc.;
 - design their own comics;
 - project images from the iPad to a larger screen for the entire class to view
 - create music;
 - use as a teleprompter for videos and podcasts;
 - develop and keep official forms to track student progress, including I.E.P.s;
 - prerecord lectures for those who were absent and/or need the information again;
 - have students review and critique different apps;
- (Creative Commons; Dodson, 2011; Ferenstein, 2011; Ryan, 2011; Schroeder, 2010; Sketchley, 2011)

Regardless of the technology and strategies used, if the teacher is well trained, open to the pedagogy and believes in what he/she is doing to support learning, then the chances are excellent that whatever tools are being utilized, will most likely be successful.

Online Resources:

- Apple iPad. Retrieved online <http://www.apple.com/ipad/>
This is the official site for the iPad that describes all of its features.



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- Barseghian, T. (2011, January 26). A day in the life of the iPad classroom. Retrieved online <http://mindshift.kqed.org/2011/01/a-day-in-the-life-of-the-ipad-classroom/>
This is an article about the pilot use of iPads in a middle school algebra class in San Francisco.
- Barseghian, T. (2011, January 26). A look in the iPad classroom. Retrieved online <http://mindshift.kqed.org/slideshow/a-look-inside-the-ipad-classroom/>
A pictorial of the use of the iPad in a middle school algebra class is provided in this article.
- Creative Commons. (n.d.). 53 interesting ways to use an iPad in the classroom. Retrieved online https://docs.google.com/present/view?id=dhn2vcv5_721gdk5jtd8
A very rich source of a myriad of ways in which iPads can be used in the classroom from primary grades through high school.
- Dodson, A. (2011, March 8). Midland teacher uses Apple iPad to keep classroom innovative and organized. Retrieved online http://www.mlive.com/midland/index.ssf/2011/03/midland_teacher_uses_apple_ipad_to_keep_classroom_innovative_and_organized.html
This is a brief article about a few ways in which an iPad is being used in a science classroom.
- Ferenstein, G. (2011, March 3). How the iPad 2 will revolutionize education. Retrieved online <http://www.fastcompany.com/1733662/how-the-ipad-2-will-revolutionize-classroom-education>
This brief article describes newer features that educators can use to reach more of their students more effectively.
- Heitin, L. (2011, April 4). Writing re-launched: Teaching with digital tools. Retrieved online <http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2011/04/04/02digital.h04.html?cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2>
A variety of ways in which to meaningfully incorporate writing into the curriculum is provided in this article.
- Hu, W. (2011, January, 4). Math that moves: Schools embrace the iPad. Retrieved online <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/05/education/05tablets.html>
This article provides an overview of the use of iPads in different content areas.
- McCrea, B. (2011, March 9). iPads invade the computer lab. Retrieved online <http://thejournal.com/articles/2011/03/09/ipads-invade-the-computer-lab.aspx>
A brief description of how iPads can be used in the classroom is given in this article.
- Ryan, S. (2011, April 20). iPads and iPods in the classroom. Retrieved online <http://teacher.ocps.net/groups/ipodsintheclassroom/>
This site provides online access to different applications in numerous areas including math, science, technology, social studies, world languages and language arts.



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- Schroeder, B. (2010, April 23). 10 ways to use the iPad in your classroom. Retrieved online <http://itcboisestate.wordpress.com/2010/04/23/ipad-2/>
A list of different uses of an iPad is provided in this article.
- Sketchley, M. (2011, March 8). The iPad in the EFL classroom. Retrieved online http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/will_the_ipad_2_make_the_grade_for_classroom_usage.php
Several different applications of the iPad to use in the classroom, including in language acquisition settings, are given in this piece.
- Walker, K. (2006). Millennials and schools of the future. Retrieved online <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/43565847/millennials>
This research brief explores the characteristics of the current population of students and their educational needs.

Developing an Acceptable Use Policy

- Williamson, R. (2010). Social media: Developing an acceptable use policy. Retrieved online http://www.ronwilliamson.com/RW_Web/Rons_Research_Briefs_files/SocialMediaAcceptableUse.pdf

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