

iPad Action Research Academy Application

Why am I interested in the iPad Action Research Academy?

The first thing that comes to my mind is: Why would I not be interested? I love technology, I love Apple products, I love teaching. But I have attached a glimpse into my vision for using iPads in my classroom that will allow you to see why I am so interested (and excited).

Why should I be selected for the iPad Action Research Academy?

For this endeavor to be successful you need five teachers that are creative and willing to make changes in their teaching practices. They also need to be willing to work well together and to be positive spokespeople for this project. As I look at these attributes, I feel they are a fit for me. I am highly creative, which can be a detriment at times, but for this project creativity is needed. I am also willing to change. When I was a beginning teacher, my wise administrator commented on the importance of changing and growing as teachers. At the time, I had no idea what he was talking about. But over the years I have come to understand that to be a strong teacher, one has to continually reflect and then change to meet the needs of our students. I am willing to do that. I am also willing to commit to working with the four other teachers in this academy. My goal would be for us to work as a team, supporting each other through it all. We will be walking in unknown territory and will need to stick together. I also am willing to commit to be a positive spokesperson for this project in front of other teachers and parents.

Enough about me! I have been dreaming of the day that I might have iPads in my classroom so wrote up the following to give you a glimpse into my dream.

Using iPads in My Primary Classroom

I am extremely excited about the idea of using iPads in my kindergarten / first grade combination class. Although I see great potential for the use of an iPad in any classroom, there are added benefits in a combination class. As I have looked at apps for the iPads, I have seen the potential for differentiation, not only between the two grades, but true differentiation based on the skill level and needs of each individual student.

As I plan my lessons, I will endeavor to use the iPads as a means to get to my goals. These are questions I will ask myself:

- What is my objective?

- Is there an app on this subject?
- Will the iPad/app enhance or hinder my student's engagement and learning? My plan is to NOT get caught up in the thrill of using iPads and instead to target their use for times when student learning will be enhanced. (Of course, my hope is that I can come up with a plan for every subject so that the iPads can be used to enhance learning throughout the day.)

I realize that I also need to be open to using iPads in ways that I cannot even begin to imagine at this point. I do not want to simply use the iPad as a replacement tool for what is currently used in the classroom (like using a pen instead of a pencil). Instead, I need to let go of what currently exists, take off any blinders that I have on (probably many) and look at things in a fresh way.

Sample Projects

I love to dream dreams so here are a few dreams I have for using iPads in my classroom.

1) Math Talks

One project that I am very excited about is using iPads to record student thinking. Students would be given a math problem to solve and be asked to use the Show Me app on their iPads as they solve the problem. This app not only records their voice, but also records their writing on the iPad. Students would be instructed to TALK as they solved the problem. (There is a wonderful sample of this on the Show Me site. In the background you can hear the teacher telling her students, "Don't forget to talk!" as she sends them off to work on a math problem. This is so different from our usual direction to work quietly!!!) I could then play student work back later and gain an understanding of each child's thinking. There is not enough time in the day to hear each child do this currently, but the iPad would make this possible. These recordings could also be used during parent conferences.

2) Writing Assessment

This same idea above could also be used for a writing assessment. As students write on the iPad, they will be asked to think aloud. By using the Show Me app, I will gain a better understanding of where they are at in their understanding of phonics, sight words, punctuation, and everything else that goes into writing. Once again, this recoding could be used at parent conferences.

3) Using QR Codes

Imagine admiring a piece of student art, noticing a QR code attached to the corner, scanning the code with your phone and having the artist begin to tell you about the artwork. Maybe they tell you step by step how it was made or maybe why they chose that subject. Or maybe you are walking through a science exhibit and next to each investigation there is a card with a QR code. You scan the code and the (student) scientist tells you about the experiment. Maybe the scientist even gives you directions on replicating the experiment. This could also be used for a writing display. You scan a QR code and hear a child's voice reading their own piece of writing

to you. This is all possible with an iPad. The FotoBabble app allows you to take a photo of a project and then record yourself talking about that photo. QR generators like Kaywa allow you to create QR codes. So once you have finished using FotoBabble, you can use Kaywa to generate a QR code that would take you directly to the interview. Seriously, this concept absolutely amazes me ... and I am just beginning to have glimmers of what we could do with QR codes.

iPad Applications

As I have researched schools currently using iPads in primary classrooms, the following apps seemed worthy of further investigation:

1) Search tools that allow teachers to find appropriate apps for their students:

- Discover - <http://itunes.apple.com/app/discover-apps/id440101665?mt=8#> - This \$1.99 app lets you search for apps meeting your specifications.
- KinderTown - <http://www.kindertown.com/> - free app developed for parents to find the best educational apps for their children.
- ABCya.com - <http://www.abcya.com/> - a website that offers a variety of free educational apps for children.
- APPitic - <http://appitic.com/index.php> - a categorized list of 1,300 plus educational apps for the iPad
- Teach With Your iPad - <http://teachwithyouripad.wikispaces.com/> - a wiki that contains tips for teaching with iPads, along with a huge categorized list of educational iPad apps
- iPad As - <http://edtechteacher.org/index.php/teaching-technology/mobile-technology-apps/ipad-as> - a list of apps categorized by learning objective
- LiveBinder - <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/26195> - a list of iPad apps
- App Shopper - <http://appshopper.com/> - this service allows you to create a wishlist and then it lets you know when the apps go on sale

2) Possible apps for my students to use:

- TeachMe: Kindergarten 99 cents
- TeachMe: 1st Grade - 99 cents
- Brainpop Videos
- Six and One Kid's Math
- Trace Letters
- Fill in the Blanks – phonics
- Good Reader
- ABC Families
- Little Sky Writer - \$1.99 – app for teaching printing
- Starfall – free
- Talking Ben – free

- Alpha Writer \$2.99
- A Jazzy Day - <http://itunes.apple.com/app/a-jazzy-day-music-education/id493451508?mt=8> - \$4.99
- Whole Wide World – <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/whole-wide-world/id502033710?ls=1&mt=8> - 99 cents

3) Apps that would allow my students to create projects:

- Toon Tastic - \$1.99 – allows students to create cartoons
- Popplet - allows students to create bubble maps –free
- Creative Book Builder - \$3.00
- Storykit – free
- Educreations Interactive Whiteboard – free
- Show Me – this app both serves as a clearing house for videos made by others AND allows iPad users to create videos
- FotoBabble – allows students to take a photo of a project and then talk about that project
- Kaywa – generates QR codes

4) Apps for teachers that will facilitate student use:

- Dropbox – free – to save student work
- Splashtop / Doceri – connects iPad to computer, Doceri records audio and video, both work with Apples or PCs

5) Resources for teachers using iPads

- <http://ipadeducators.ning.com/> - a Ning for educators to share ideas and to connect with other teachers / schools with similar programs
- <http://ipadacademy.com/> - This academy offers training for teachers using iPads. This training consists of online tutorials and tips.
- <http://teachwithyouripad.wikispaces.com/> - a wiki that contains tips for teaching with iPads, along with a huge categorized list of iPad apps

Implementation

As I have thought through the beginning stages of using iPads in my classroom, I have created a very tentative plan for implementing the iPads as an educational tool in my classroom:

Step One: Introducing the iPads

- Contract ... Teacher shows an iPad to the class and briefly shows one app for the “Uhhh ... Ahhhh” effect. Teacher goes over rules involved in the use of the iPad and has students sign a contract agreeing to follow the rules – the contract also contains the consequences. (If the district requires parent signatures on contracts, they would be sent home at this time.)
- How to Use an iPad ... Teacher models basic (very basic) steps to using an iPad using the document camera so that all can see. The teacher briefly introduces one simple app. Then the students each receive an iPad to use. (Note: The checkout/return to the cart procedure would

also be taught at this point. I think I would have the iPads numbered from 1-25, just as I have the students numbered so that each child receives the same iPad each time.)

Step Two: Introducing New Apps

- To introduce new apps, I will give a VERY brief overview (name of app, goal of using app, and any steps students need to know to use the app). I will try to strike a balance between giving students enough information so that their time is not wasted trying to get the app to work with allowing students to take control of the iPad as a tool and discover things for themselves.

Step Three: Student Ownership of their Learning

- My goal is for students to be able to choose which app to use to work on a targeted standard. That means I will need to have at least two apps for any standards I am targeting with the iPads.

Step Four: Student Projects

- Not only do I want students to become iPad users, I also want them to create projects using the iPad as a tool. This is an opportunity to involve students in the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This is the area of iPad use that I know the least about, but I look forward to learning more about what types of projects can be created by my students using an iPad.

Step Five: What to do if the Internet connection is down?

- This is a problem that I want to be prepared for. (Another school reported that this was their number one problem.) Although this is NOT a typical problem in our district, I want to be prepared, just in case it does occur. So I want to have a plan for this situation and even train my students ahead of time. If the Internet connection should be down, I want to be able to tell my students, "This is a Plan B day".

Questions

- Will we receive training on downloading and syncing iPads? Because we are dealing with 25 iPads, we want to be as efficient as possible!!

- Is there a budget for the purchase of apps for the iPads? While free apps would be marvelous, there are many worthwhile apps that cost 99 cents. With 25 iPads to be loaded, that would be about \$25 per app. One school reported that they spent \$20 per iPad for their first grade classes. (This was a private school so their parents paid. I plan to do this for FAR less!!)