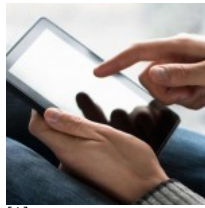**- eSchool News - http://www.eschoolnews.com -**

The 'Evergreen' iPad: Why all your apps should fit on one screen

Posted By Contributor On May 28, 2013 @ 7:28 pm In Mobile and Handheld Technologies,School Administration,Top News,Viewpoint | Comments Disabled

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With iPads, students can create just about anything, anywhere, at any time.

"Leading Change" column, June 2013 edition of *eSchool News*—In last month's column [2], I argued that by integrating tools like the iPad—a device that allows students to explore and create—and constructing a pedagogy that encourages ingenuity, we can nurture a process of learning that crafts innovative, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial minds.

Yet, despite the incredible influx of iPads into American schools, this opportunity to transform the learning process is largely being wasted.

Back in September, I published a widely circulated article entitled "5 Critical Mistakes Schools Make with iPads (And How To Correct Them)." The piece outlined the common iPad integration errors and missteps I see when working with various schools in our EdTechTeacher programs. In the article, I relay the story of a Latin teacher who declares the iPad "useless" because he couldn't find a good Latin app. It simply didn't occur to him to have his students speak, write, listen, record, and present Latin using non-Latin apps.

Time and again, I run into educators who spend hours reviewing long lists of largely drill-and-kill subject apps, such as "100 History Apps" or "50 Spanish Apps for the Classroom." This obsession demonstrates the most fundamental of iPad integration mistakes—the belief that the iPad is fundamentally a vehicle for teaching content with apps.

It's a limiting and narrow vision that blinds many educators to a broader and more powerful truth: *With iPads, students can create just about anything, anywhere, at any time.* The creative learning possibilities for student demonstrations of knowledge and understanding are limited only by the imagination. As HarvardX Research Fellow Justin Reich puts it: "Educators shouldn't think of iPads as repositories of apps, but rather as portable media creation devices." Incredible opportunities for active, immersed learning emerge when educators reflect on "how a small suite of apps related to annotation, curation, and image, audio, and video production [can] support diverse student performances of understanding."

Once educators focus on the iPad's creative learning potential, they can start to cultivate a small set of "Evergreen Apps" into almost limitless instructional possibilities. Evergreen Apps—such as iMovie, Garage Band, Explain Everything, Paper53, Inspiration, Animoto, VoiceThread, and Doodlecast—are non-subject apps useful throughout the year for speaking, writing, listening, drawing, annotating, curating, collaborating, sharing, and more. (Note: I did not coin the term "Evergreen Apps," and it might have originated with Frasier Speirs.) Instead of trying to find an app to teach every curriculum topic (an impossible feat and a waste of time), educators instead can integrate Evergreen Apps, along with perhaps a few select content apps, to foster student creativity and innovation.

And all the Evergreen Apps teachers need to cultivate powerful learning environments can fit on *one screen.*

Follow the 4Cs

Begin by exploring a set of Evergreen Apps covering a broad spectrum of *consumption, curation, creativity,* and *connection*. Using apps that help students consume, curate, create, and collaborate on the iPad, educators have more than enough firepower to develop creative and purposeful activities. These activities not only extend the entire academic year, but also help generate what author and Harvard professor Tony Wagner terms "a culture of innovation"—an environment that encourages students to be the kind of active, immersed thinkers essential for today's cognitively demanding and competitive global workforce.

Consumption: This means learning how to maximize the benefits of the iPad for consuming information. For this, we don't even start with an app—we start with the web. Swimming in an ocean of hundreds of thousands of apps, teachers sometimes forget that the world's information is at their fingertips. Curriculum content is available en masse on the internet, and it's easy to find teaching resources as PDFs—files that can be opened and used on the iPad in any number of apps. A PDF file on an iPad can be annotated and combined with images, audio, video, a drawing, a graph, a chart, and more as a foundation for active learning. It is also relatively easy to convert webpage articles and posts into PDFs.

Another facet of consumption is to provide students with greater accessibility to content on the iPad; for instance, showing them how to enable the iPad's native "speak text" function so they can hear words pronounced and stories read aloud.

Educators can use an Evergreen App like Socrative to collect information on what students know, understand, and believe instantaneously. Socrative enables teachers (and students) to create a poll, survey, or true-false and open-response questions and see immediate, live responses. "How difficult was last night's homework?" "What was the main idea of today's lesson?" "How well do you feel you understood the reading?" "What did I teach you in the last 15 minutes?" With Socrative, teachers have an incredible tool to amass information quickly on student thinking—information that can result in improved teaching.

Curation: This is the ability to collect, organize, and annotate materials.

With a versatile annotation app such as Notability, students can write notes (on a PDF article, for example), type notes, highlight specific passages, or insert a picture, drawing, graph, chart, or sticky note. But they can also integrate websites and media and even add their own voice—a combination of features that transcends the affordances of pen and paper note-taking. Combined with Evernote, a useful app for collecting, creating, and organizing notes, students have tremendous curation possibilities.

Creativity: This is at the heart of EdTechTeacher's mission, and nurturing a culture of innovation is our most important goal. Once teachers begin to amass a strong arsenal of educational resources, they can integrate Evergreen Apps like Explain Everything, Book Creator, Animoto, iMovie, Garage Band, VoiceThread, Doodlecast and others to generate untold possibilities for student creation of educational content.

For instance, students could create a math tutorial or a virtual tour of a historic site using Explain Everything, a powerful screencasting app. Or, they might create a multimedia book report using Book Creator, an app that allows users to record their voice and put videos in their book. Students could create a lively Spanish vocabulary presentation or digital story using Animoto. They might film and edit video of their science lab with iMovie, or create a song for music class with Garage Band. Students could collaboratively comment about images and any topic using VoiceThread. Young students might draw stories with Doodlecast.

On Vimeo at https://vimeo.com/38247581 [3], you can watch a first grade teacher at the Burley School Technology Program in Chicago practicing something resembling what you and I might remember as "story time." The teacher is reading to her students, and her students listen sitting quietly on the floor. But where mouths are silent, minds are busy. With heads bent over their iPads, her students trace their fingers along bright screens to create girls in pink dresses, jump ropes, clouds, and numbers—all visualizations of the details in the story, which, in this case, is a poem. Later, students are asked to offer explanations of their visualizations and take what they learned to craft their own poems.

With a simple change in approach, this teacher transformed "story time" into a "writer's workshop"—and she didn't do it with a poetry app. Rather, she used a screencasting app and brought in her own content—content that could morph into illustrations of the water cycle for a science lesson or the hands of a clock for portraying time.

With a screencasting app such as Explain Everything (or the simpler ScreenChomp app for K-2 students), students have a blank canvas to write, draw, type, or add pictures, audio, video, and special effects. They can create just about anything and do it easily. Thus, the real challenge is not the content in the app itself, but rather the act of brainstorming ways of putting students at the center of the content creation process.

Connection: To become true 21st-century learners, students must learn how to share and collaborate both digitally and physically. The challenge with the iPad is that it's not a computer—there's no hard drive or USB port—and apps are not designed for separate accounts, so educators and students must rely on cloud computing. Dropbox provides cloud storage and facilitates sharing, but Google Drive is hands-down the best app for collaboration. It's free, and not only does it allow up to 5GB of storage, it enables students and teachers to create and edit papers, presentations, and more. And multiple people can work on the same document, at the same time, anywhere in the world.

A relevant iPad classroom

If educators keep these 4Cs in mind as they evaluate apps, they can begin to tap into the iPad's creative potential. The key is seeing it not as a gadget or something to perpetuate teacher-centric instruction through new mediums, but rather as a device with the power to shape students into active and

adaptive thinkers. Moving forward with a powerful framework for iPad integration, teachers can—and will—put students into authentic, relevant, and creative learning environments.

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