iPad possibilities –
Transforming education; Connecting with the world

"When I walk into a classroom and see all of the students playing a math app on an iPad, I think I'd rather see them using a worksheet"
~Chris Kennedy, YTEUBC Inspiring Educators Series Lecture, Sept. 24, 2013

Technology use for technology's sake is not what we are striving for in education today. Transforming learning by providing opportunities that would not otherwise be afforded is a goal that, with emerging technologies and increased access, may be achievable. This transformation can be as simple as allowing for as-needed differentiation, as is the case when providing a student with the option to audio record, video record or 'screen capture' record his/her ideas. Such differentiation, in my experience, doesn't occur on a large scale when it is too much of a drain on teacher time.

What kind of applications fall into this 'Transformative' category? According to Murray and Olcese (2011), those that make use of the particular affordances of the iPad and allow for content creation and knowledge building - especially where this involves entry to a 'global community' through collaborative tools -meet the threshold. I would add that apps that provide for as-needed differentiation, personalization and access beyond the walls of the classroom also fall into this category. As a teacher who was able to connect her class with a research vessel several hundred kilometers off the Pacific Coast at the press of a button; who has tried to convince six year olds that the moon doesn't actually disappear during the day and who can get a lasting window into the mind of a child through audio, video or screen capture narration, I am forever in debt to my iPad!

Of course, the development of more interactive apps and the affordances of existing and still-to-be developed technologies appear to have the potential to revolutionize education, it is only through the critical review and selection of apps and technologies by educators that teaching and learning will truly change. Powerful technology does not replace solid pedagogy!

Reference:

Murray, O. & Olcese, N., (2011). Teaching and Learning with iPads, Ready or Not? - Springer. (n.d.). Retrieved September 24, 2013, from http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11528-011-0540-6#page-1

June 2010:
Almost 30,000 applications are categorized by developers of iPhones, iPods and iPads under the heading of "education." Of these the majority are drill & practice.
(Murray&Olcese, 2011)

Affordances
iPad = multi-touch display, gps, accelerometer, rotating screen, Wifi, 3G, Bluetooth accesss, peer to peer sharing, long battery life, camera, video, shipped with essential app package…

SCARFE Digital Sandbox – Come Play!

Always explore with a critical eye and ask yourself key questions such as:
- Is it intuitive?
- Is it interactive? Does it support content creation and collaboration?
- Can you edit once you've started?
- Can work be easily exported?

Some 'current' favourite Apps for student 'content' creation (as selected by 3rd & 7th graders)

ComicLife – This intuitive app allows students to create comic book style pages using their own photos, imported images and text bubbles. It has a wide variety of fonts, tools and layouts available to create very individual works of art. Also available on MAC and PC desktop and laptops.
- I've had students create 'how to' comics; comics to describe their lives or their community or a field trip. What about a walk around the neighbourhood?

Inspiration – I love Concept Mapping software. It allows for a great deal of self-expression and allows the student to experiment with categorizing and organizing his/her thoughts, images & concepts. This software, along with the more 'primary-oriented' Kidspiration is intuitive with a large clip art gallery. Each piece of clipart is labeled to support developing readers and writers. Available on iPad, MAC and PC and online via Webspiration.
- Excellent for any kind of concept map; story outlines; Venn diagrams; T-Charts etc.

Videolicious creates quick and easy yet fairly elegant short videos using still images and/or video clips. Create your own 'vine' movie! Students add voice and video narration once they've selected their images. This narration is automatically built in to the video with or without a musical selection.
- Sensory poems; how-to videos; advertisements; the list really is endless.

White Board Style apps:
All have community forums and include camera, photo import, drawing and text tools. I find these highly useful for pre-, post-, and formative assessment as well as storytelling.
- **ShowMe :** intuitive, single page; no editing once you begin recording.
- WhiteBoard (by GreenGar Studios) Affords 'peer to peer collaboration' in real-time; build with layers
- **ExplainEverything** Multi-page; editing features

Search apps & read teacher reviews at:
http://www.eraccommons.ca

Sandbox Session – September 2013   @yvonnedtechtalk

http://blogs.ubc.ca/scarfesandbox/

PRACTICE