

Q & A with the Tech Integrator:

What is Crossroads philosophy regarding the use of technology in the classroom?

At Crossroads, we view technology as a tool that supports and enhances our already rich curriculum. We also believe, in the Middle School, that it is our responsibility to help our students develop the digital literacies necessary to be successful students in the 21st century.

Why 1:1 in the Middle School?

- To prepare our students for their futures, we recognized that they needed to be comfortable using digital devices for their schoolwork. One set of 20 laptops to be shared between the three Middle School classes did not allow for this.
- Our teachers are excited about incorporating technology into their classes as a way to better engage and prepare our students. They cannot do this if they have to share one set of laptops with the other Middle School classes.
- Class time was being wasted because students had to travel to the tech lab in the Barn to sign out the laptops before they could begin their work. They also had to leave class early to return the laptops. If anyone experienced technical difficulties with a laptop, they lost even more class time, as they had to go back to the tech lab to retrieve a different laptop.
- Since not all students had access to computers at home, it made it difficult for them to complete digital assignments which further limited our teachers' ability to use technology in their classes. Integrating a 1:1 program solved this problem.
- A 1:1 program also helps our students learn to take personal responsibility for their own equipment, while improving their ability to organize their digital work and to do online research.

Why iPads?

- iPads are more affordable for a 1:1 program. They are also lightweight and compact and thus are more appropriate for Middle School students to transport around campus and to and from school.
- The apps that an iPad offers are excellent and offer greater diversity. Our students are using Pages, Numbers, Notability, Sky Safari, iMovie, Keynote, POETRY by The Poetry Foundation, Quizlet, Google Drive, and many more, including organizational apps, drawing apps, and photo editing apps.

What are some examples of how the iPads are actually used in the Middle School?

- Emily Dickinson Project
 - The introduction is done through a directed webquest at the Emily Dickinson online museum instead of the teacher giving information lecture style.
 - Students are allowed to choose which poems to research because they have access to all of her work, including original documents through the POETRY app by the Poetry Foundation.
 - Students are able to access scholarly resources as they prepare to write their own poetry analysis.

- Literature Responses
 - Students are able to choose which platform they want to use for their response (spoken, slide show, video, model), which increases their engagement and motivation.
- Lady's Slipper Project
 - Students are able to access scholarly resources as they do their research.
 - Students are able to record and organize their data.
 - Students are able to take their own pictures.
 - Students are able to incorporate research, data tables, and images into their papers with ease.
- Science Class
 - While doing investigations on moss and flower types, the students use their iPads to take pictures of the specimens, including pictures through the dissecting scopes. They then upload the pictures to Notability where they label them and make notes.
 - Both 6th and 8th graders study astronomy. The app Sky Safari is by far the best teaching tool for astronomy our science teacher has ever seen.
 - The app Numbers allows the students to create data tables and graphs of their results immediately. They can then insert these graphs into their final science papers by using the app Pages.
- General
 - The app Quizlet creates digital flash cards and different options for quizzing yourself with these flash cards. The students are very motivated to use Quizlet, and their digital notecards can't get lost. They are able to study at home or at school. They can also access quizlets made by other classmates or the teacher.
 - The students who have trouble with organization have shown an increased ability to keep track of their work, resulting in better quality and more thorough work.

What are some examples of how the iPads are actually used in the Lower School?

- In 4th grade the students use:
 - Socrative to take interactive quizzes on grammar and reading
 - Digital photography for their poetry unit
 - Quizlet to review vocabulary
 - Keynote for their Africa project
 - Math apps for math fact review
- In 3rd grade the students use:
 - Digital photography for a writing response project
 - Barefoot Atlas to support their geography unit
 - Stack the States for U.S. geography review
 - Math apps for math fact review
- In 2nd grade the students use:
 - Digital photography for a writing response project
 - The app Inventions to enhance their simple machines unit

- Math apps for math fact review

Do students take notes on their iPads?

- No, studies show that students retain information better if they take notes by hand.
- Exceptions would include students with dysgraphia or organization issues and when students are annotating a diagram or image downloaded at the teacher's request.

Is our goal to "go paperless?"

- No, our goal is to support and enhance our students' educational experiences.
- Though we see the value in working towards a "green" or paperless system, this cannot take precedence over our goal of providing our students with the best possible educational experience.