

Hamline University

DigitalCommons@Hamline

---

School of Education and Leadership Student  
Capstone Projects

School of Education and Leadership

---

Fall 2020

## Using iPads in a Readers' and Writers' Workshop

Megan Engfer

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_cp](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Engfer, Megan, "Using iPads in a Readers' and Writers' Workshop" (2020). *School of Education and Leadership Student Capstone Projects*. 605.

[https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse\\_cp/605](https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp/605)

This Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education and Leadership at DigitalCommons@Hamline. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Education and Leadership Student Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Hamline. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@hamline.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hamline.edu).

## **Using iPads in a readers' and writers' workshop**

By: Megan L. Engfer

A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching

Hamline University

St. Paul, MN

August 2020

**Content Project Facilitator: Jennifer Carlson**

**Content Expert: Anne Sawyer Beach**

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	5
Experience With Technology as a Teacher.....	6
My Experience With Technology as a Student.....	7
Complications.....	9
Rational.....	10
Significance.....	11
Summary.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.....	13
What is readers' and writers' workshop?.....	14
Meaningful Workshops.....	18
Technology in Schools.....	20
Teachers and Technology.....	22
Students and Technology.....	25
Challenges with Technology.....	26
Professional Development.....	27
Teachers Motivations for Professional Development.....	28
Building Teacher Confidence.....	29
Student Engagement.....	29
Technology and Motivation.....	30

- Independence and Collaboration.....30
- Merging Technology into the Workshop.....32
  - Learning Management Systems .....33
- Conclusion.....34
- CHAPTER THREE: Methodology of Research.....35
  - Introduction and Rationale.....35
  - Research Theories.....36
    - Constructivism.....36
  - Project Description.....38
  - Setting.....39
  - Audience.....39
  - Timeline.....40
  - Conclusion.....41
- CHAPTER FOUR: Reflection.....42
  - Chapter Review.....42
    - Chapter One, Introduction.....42
    - Chapter Two, Literature Review.....43
    - Chapter Three, Project Description.....43
    - Chapter Four, Reflection.....43
  - Major Learnings.....44
    - Research.....44
    - Personal Growth.....45

Project Development.....46

Project Implications.....47

Project Limitations.....47

Communicating Project Results.....48

Benefits to the Teaching Profession.....48

Summary.....49

REFERENCES.....50

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

A typical day in the English Language Arts classroom that I shared with my two other co-teachers started with students entering the room and taking their seats in our class circle. Our classroom teachers attended training on restorative justice practices and took the idea of a community circle back to the classroom and decided to teach our English language arts mini lesson in a circle. After entering the room and taking their seats, students would begin to complete the warm up activity on their iPads and then place their iPads under their chairs and wait for the mini lesson to begin.

Many of the students thought the tasks or responding to a question activating their prior knowledge within an online class discussion forum was a simple and easy way to begin the class. Occasionally there would be a struggle with some students who would want to keep using their iPad after our warm up time had ended, or students would be using their iPad for an unassigned activity such as games, watching Youtube or checking email.

This got me thinking about how I could change the way I use iPads in the classroom. I wanted to teach students how to use iPads as a learning tool for academic success and learning life skills. This is what led to the research question: *What do teachers need to know about using iPads for engagement in a readers' and writers' workshop?* I believe that more

research in this area will help teachers better understand how iPads can be used as a learning tool in the classroom.

In this chapter I explain how I came to be interested in the topic of technology in the classroom, how my interest has developed, why this is important to me, may inform other teachers, administrators, and school policy makers. I also discuss the complications of use of technology in the classroom.

### **Experience With Technology as a Teacher**

For the past three years I have taught special education for 6th grade students who spend up to 60% of their school day in a special education setting. These students may see a special education teacher for small group instruction, or be placed in a co-taught class which is led by both a core content teacher, such as math or science, and a special education teacher. I taught special education for middle schoolers who needed extra reading classes, and also co-taught classes of reader's workshop, writer's workshop, and 6th grade math. The ELA classes that I co-taught used a workshop model. I, as a new teacher who was still completing my elementary education licensure program, was unfamiliar with this model and had never seen it before. Once I started to understand the flow of a workshop model class, I began to like the structure and thought it was a model that worked best for general and special education students. I also was able to watch and learn from two great teachers who worked as a team co-teaching and sharing both the teaching time and various other teacher responsibilities.

Many of the students in the class enjoyed starting our class sitting in the circle for the warm up and during the mini lesson. After the mini lesson was complete, they moved to

their assigned table and began work time. Some students chose to work in a teacher group and some students were asked to go work with a teacher for more support. The students had the option to complete their work in a traditional workshop notebook, or through the Notability application on their school iPad. Some students always chose to use their iPad while others preferred writing with paper and pencil.

The other two teachers and I regularly rotated teaching two separate small groups with students who needed help, while another teacher checked in with students, answering questions, and offering help to different table groups. We worked with the Teachers College Units of Study that foster student independence and also align with state standards (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). This structure worked well for our 6th graders, and for 6th graders with special needs who had the support of a special education teacher to make assignment modifications and accommodations. Even with the support of three teachers in the classroom some students still struggled to complete their daily work. Through many conversations with different students I started to notice some of the students thought: "If I bring my iPad to class with me then I have to do work that is really hard" or "If I don't bring any school supplies with me to class then I will not have to do anything." This experience caused me to reflect on the possibility that teachers need to be given more time and education on how to engage students in learning and about how to use technology in the classroom, and students need more training about how they can use it to help them engage with classroom activities and assignments.

### **My Experience With Technology as a Student**

My experience with technology as a student has been very different than my experience with technology as a teacher. I graduated from high school in 2010; my school did not have laptops or iPads for students to use at school and take home. When we developed a project using technology, we would take a class trip down the hallway to the computer lab where a librarian would walk through the steps to completing the assignment with the classroom teacher. In middle school, each classroom had four desktop computers and a computer lab where teachers could take their classes as needed.

During both high school and middle school I had the opportunity to take elective classes such as keyboarding, web design, exploring technology, and computer programming. This led to a personal interest in HTML coding which I used to use to make custom layouts for social media and blog sites like MySpace and Xanga. Because I was also interested in art and digital design, I later used computer skills while completing my undergraduate internship with the Minnesota Gophers Women's Basketball Team. The skills and knowledge of computer programs such as Word, Powerpoint, and Excel, or online Google programs are something I have needed as a student and teacher, and I will continue to need for the rest of my life and career.

During my first year of college I was assigned to give a presentation with a small group of two other girls. We planned out our project together and each talked about the individual roles we would be responsible to complete. One of the girls in our group admitted that she would not be able to help with the PowerPoint because she had never made a presentation before and did not know how to use the program. To me this was shocking because I made my first Powerpoint for school in fourth grade. As I reflect on this

I now recognize that I was fortunate to go to a private school that had access to funding for technology which allowed me to be exposed to programs like Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, keyboarding programs, and other online learning platforms beginning at a young age.

Because of my experience, I would like my students to be fully prepared for tasks they may encounter in college or after high school.

### **Complications**

In my experience, I have noted that implementing technology into the classroom is not always easy for teachers because some did not grow up having the same experience with technology as students do today. I consider myself to be someone who is comfortable using technology, however, I have also had to ask an eleven-year-old to help me with certain features on my iPad or within applications. Teachers may have their own insecurities about working with technology in the classroom because it is unfamiliar to them. Because some teachers may lack training in the area of technology they may miss opportunities to add additional learning experiences to the classroom. There are many activities or projects that could spark new student interest and increase student engagement if adding technology was an option.

Teachers often spend many hours each school year participating in professional development classes required by the state and the school district; however, with so many initiatives and issues to focus upon, there may be some educators that may not have the choice or opportunity to attend workshops that teach teachers how to actually teach using technology in the classroom. Many schools do not have the budget to offer elective classes

focused on technology, thus students may not have the opportunity to explore technology in the same ways I did.

## **Rationale**

Due to these complications I have created a project providing upper elementary teachers digital resources that can be used for professional development either on an individual or group. The project focuses on how teachers can use technology in reading and writing workshop classes.

The focus on technology for use in readers' and writers' workshops was inspired by a mother whose son struggled with dyslexia. James (name changed for confidentiality) was a 6th grader when I first met his family and they were worried about making his transition to middle school. His mom requested an IEP meeting early in the school year to talk with the IEP team about how his middle school teachers could work with him best. His mother is a literacy coach for another school district in the Twin Cities area and very passionate about literacy. She volunteered at her son's school in an English language arts classroom once a week. During the IEP meeting we talked about ways he could use his iPad and assistive technology features to help with reading and writing in his Workshop classes. During the meeting his mom asked if the team knew of a way that a digital Reader's and Writer's notebook could be used in the class, and how teachers were using technology in the classroom to help students with special needs.

After the meeting I started to think “Yes, our students can choose to complete their work on the iPads available in the classroom, but how am I actually teaching them to use these digital tools?” At that time, I did not have a professional development experience on how to use technology in the classroom; thus, zero training on the applications that came preloaded on my school issued iPad. Everything I learned about my teacher iPad I taught myself or had asked another teacher or student to show me.

As the school year progressed I kept reflecting on the IEP meeting I had earlier that year and how each Reader’s and Writer’s workshop assignment could have been completed digitally to help students with reading and writing or how we could make assignments more interesting and meaningful to students if technology was involved.

### **Significance**

This area of research and the idea of creating professional development for teachers related to technology is important because iPads, laptops and Chromebooks being used on a one-to-one basis are still very new to many schools. Many teachers may not have grown up using iPads or laptops in school, or did not have their own computer until they went to college or later. When educated on the tools to use technology in the classroom teachers may begin to expand their knowledge and comfort level and then construct ways to incorporate technology into their weekly or daily lessons. My hope is that eventually teachers will begin to feel comfortable using technology tools in the classroom leading to the creation of more increased digital literacy skills.

Incorporating technology into the classroom is important to students and has many benefits to students. Technology can not only help all students engage with learning, but it

can also help students with special needs complete their reading and writing assignments in a way that works for them by using assistive technology features and programs. With assistive technology features students may use text-to-speech to listen to written text, or use speech-to-text to verbalize their ideas when writing. Along with completing the classwork for various subjects, students are learning how to interact with technology and creating habits that will transfer with them to their post secondary experiences and into the workplace.

Investment in technology for the classroom can benefit students in areas of academic skills, and also in the areas of life skills. Some schools have technology resources that stay in the classroom, or that students take home with them each night. Smaller schools or districts may have between six and ten classroom iPads that students share at different points throughout a school day. Investing money in classroom technology can provide students with access to greater educational opportunities such as inquiry based learning and digital literacy opportunities.

### **Summary**

Through my own experiences as both a teacher, not receiving training on how to use technology with my students, and my experiences with technology as a student, I believe it is important to create tools to help teachers implement lessons that use technology to increase student engagement and prepare students for their future. Therefore, creating resources for teachers will be an impactful way to help teachers and students become more comfortable with using technology in the classroom or in distance teaching and learning. In

chapter two, I discuss the current research on the benefits of technology in the classroom and how technology can improve student engagement.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Having a successful teaching framework, along with the tools to teach and ability to engage students is key to student learning. This chapter reviews the literature that answers the research question: *What do teachers need to know about using iPads for engagement in a readers' and writers' workshop?* The literature discussed in this chapter supports the readers' and writers' workshop model as a beneficial framework for student learning. This chapter also discusses the technology commonly used in schools and shares the challenges that teachers and students may face when using technology in the classroom and at home. Finally, this chapter describes how technology has had a positive impact on student engagement in learning and student motivation.

With technology growing more and more popular in schools today, it is estimated that public schools in America spend \$3 billion per year on digital content (Kaur, 2020). With so much money spent on digital content each year by school districts it is important for teachers to fully understand these technology tools. This chapter describes the importance of running a successful readers' and writers' workshop and the importance of providing professional development for educators to begin or continue to implement

technology into daily lessons. In the past, technology in schools was limited to a computer lab in a different classroom, which evolved into small desktop computer stations in each classroom at some schools, and now tablets and laptops are used by many students across the country in the classroom (Kaur, 2020). Tablets and laptops in the classroom have enabled students to continue their learning about technology and use of technology throughout the school day, rather than stop when they leave the school media center.

### **What is readers' and writers' workshop?**

To effectively teach literacy skills, many schools currently use a readers' and writers' workshop (Atwell, 1987) which are designed to offer a simple and predictable environment offering teachers the opportunity to observe students' progress and teaching to individual student needs (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). The workshop model consists of five main components: 1) a mini lesson, 2) independent work time, 3) conferencing, 4) mid-workshop teaching points, and 5) sharing (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020).

The readers' and writers' workshops are scheduled for approximately 45-50 minutes each during the school day. At the elementary level readers' and writers' workshops are typically split into two separate sessions. In the secondary grades it is more likely that there is a combination of reading and writing in one general English class or reading class.. The students engage in a mini-lesson, independent working period, individual conferences with a teacher, peer conferences, and a time for student sharing (Shackett, 2005).

Every workshop session begins with a mini lesson. This time is allotted for explicit teacher instruction. The content of a mini lesson will change from day to day, but the structure of the lesson largely remains the same, allowing students to anticipate process and product (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). Some teachers choose to teach their mini lesson on a carpet area of the classroom or a different area of the classroom, rather than having students remain in their desk during the mini lesson (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). This allows for attention to be focused on the teacher during the period of instruction. During this portion of the workshop the teacher may choose to incorporate technology through the use of an audio book, short video clip, or by showing digital presentations and displaying digital photos (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020).

Following the mini lesson teachers will dismiss students to begin their independent work time. Independent work time is a period of time after the mini lesson, between 35 to 45 minutes, where students independently work on skills taught throughout mini lessons in the current unit. In the classroom students are offered a variety of rich texts from the classroom library or school library. They then read a book of their choice during their independent work time and continue to work on skills from the unit. During this time a teacher may walk around the room conferring with individual students or leading small work group (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). During this independent work time, the students may independently use

technology to read a digital book, listen to an audio book, or use word processing software to complete the work in their reader's and writer's notebook.

Teachers may require students to use a separate readers' and writers' notebook for the work completed during the workshop time. These notebooks are not necessarily used for taking notes from the mini lesson, but are used by students to complete daily work and help students keep track of their work. For example, a lesson may call for students to track their thinking on Post It notes and stick them on the pages of books they are reading or in their notebooks; other activities include creating charts, writing to response questions, and making bullet lists in their notebook. Notebooks can also be a useful tool for teachers, teachers can use entries in reader's and writer's notebooks for classroom demonstrations or for modeling. Teachers can monitor student progress and determine when students are in need of more help on specific skills. Students can complete their work through word processing applications on a computer, Chromebook or iPad.

While students work independently, the teacher or teachers will move around the classroom and touch base and respond to as many students with questions as possible. At this point, the teacher and student confer where the teacher can provide feedback, listen to oral reading, encourage students to continue working independently by pointing them in a helpful direction when confused, and help students who may be struggling to complete work (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). This time is also important for teachers' classroom management and can help keep students working throughout the remainder of the workshop.

After circulating around the room during work time, the teacher or teachers may identify a small group of four to six students needing help with a particular teaching point from the mini lesson. The teacher may gather a small group of students who need additional challenges and extensions or need help in the same area. A teacher may reteach part of the mini lesson and clarify any questions students may have (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). This time is especially important to make sure that students grasp the concepts from the mini lesson and continue to work on particular teaching targets. Through reteaching during work time conferences, teachers can ensure that students do not fall behind in the class and continue to make progress in their reading or writing work.

While observing and conferring, the teacher may notice that many students are working towards the same topic or idea during the work time. At this point a teacher may choose to pause the work time for all students and offer a mid-workshop teaching point. Through the Apple Classroom application, teachers have the ability to lock student iPads temporarily, to make sure students are pausing their work, and then offer a mid-workshop teaching point. This is a time when the teacher wants to give additional explicit instruction to all students (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020). The teacher may offer students a reminder or quick tip to extend the mini lesson, or remind all students of ongoing habits that can help their reading and writing skill (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020).

During the last ten to fifteen minutes of the workshop the teacher will stop the workshop and give students an opportunity to share their thoughts, which is the fifth component of readers' and writers' workshop, on the reading or writing work for the day. This is a time that allows students to share their work and receive feedback from their peers (Calkins, 1994). Some elementary teachers may have a specific "share chair" or "author's chair" that is a special spot in the classroom for students to sit while they share their work from the days' workshop. As technology advances teachers have been able to use document cameras to show students work the entire class, or use screen sharing features to project digital work from the student's iPad onto a whiteboard for the class to see. These sharing sessions at the end of the workshop allow students to feel a sense of pride in their work and provides students with examples of what their peers are currently working on (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020).

**Meaningful workshops.** Alberta Education describes literacy with school-age children as a strong focus on the development of reading and writing skills (What is literacy? Retrieved November 19, 2020). As children enter the classroom they engage in learning opportunities that will have them interacting with many different forms of text, in print and digital forms, using words, visuals and graphics (What is literacy? Retrieved November 19, 2020). According to Alberta Education, students will begin to learn:

- the rules of language
- how to acquire information, evaluate it, and ethically use it
- how to construct meaning from various kinds of text and

- how to communicate effectively

Taylor & Nesheim (2000) discuss ways in which teachers can engage and motivate students to gain the most possible from a readers' or writers' workshop class. Demma (2018) wrote about her experience redesigning her writers' workshop class. In order to increase engagement to further develop literacy skills she allowed students to choose their own writing topics by eliminating writing prompts from her lessons. This gives students choice in what they are writing about and allows students to feel a more personal connection to their work. She included mentor authors in her mini lessons, which allow students to observe what authors do during the writing process, and show students that they too are authors capable of making their own decisions while writing (Demma, 2018).

In a study by Taylor and Nesheim (2000), the authors sought out to make literacy meaningful for adolescents who were emerging readers' with the workshop model. These students were considered "at-risk" which the authors defined as "demonstrating delinquent behaviors and have trouble making personal connections to learning or other people"(Taylor & Nesheim, 2000, p.318). These students also had limited exposure to reading books as children and were unfamiliar with the concept of reading for enjoyment (Taylor & Nesheim, 2000). The students participated in workshop model classes that involved reading children's literature, some students choose to read their favorite titles from childhood, or decided to read books that were favorite titles of their own children or children in their lives (Taylor & Nesheim, 2000).

Many of the students enjoyed choosing their own book from the classroom library or from the school library. The researchers found that offering choice led to more

engagement and interest by students. Students were also encouraged to share their reactions, make connections between what they read in class and their life at home (Taylor & Nesheim, 2000). Much like the findings of Demma (2018), Taylor & Nesheim found that offering students choice in a workshop model class was a way to increase student engagement. They also found that “through participation in the workshop many students started to see reading as a valuable life activity and a form of enjoyment or entertainment” (p. 317). The authors stated:

Some of the students tried new reading behaviors such as reading aloud with inflection, using different voices, and using gestures to enhance the story. Other students began to pay attention and respond positively to their peers as they heard them read aloud, others took steps toward becoming adult reading models for the children in their lives by practicing and using shared reading techniques. (p. 317)

From this research, it was affirmed that readers’ and writers’ workshop is important to students because it provides them with an opportunity to receive explicit instruction, work independently, confer with teachers and peers, and get feedback from teachers and peers. The workshop model has opportunities to allow for student choice in their selection of what they read and topics they write about. Readers’ and writers’ workshops also allow for opportunities to incorporate technology into lessons and daily activities.

### **Technology in schools**

In the article *Emerging Pedagogies for the use of iPads in Schools* the Geer et al. (2017) suggest that it is well known that iPads are being used at an increasing rate at a number of schools across the country and the world for students of all ages from

pre-kindergarten through the college level. There are several factors that are connected to teachers' technology use in the classroom. Some of the factors include: teacher beliefs and attitudes, teaching experience, technology experience, and teacher preparedness (Geer et al., 2017). Along with these factors there are other factors that play a role in not using technology. They are: availability of technology, ability to connect to the internet, professional development and teacher training, and technology support. Along with teacher ability and access to technology itself, other factors that play a role in limited use of technology in the classroom are the number of students in a class and ability of the students in the classroom to use technology (Kaur, 2020).

There are many reasons why technology has increased in schools, the iPad in particular is one of the most popular devices in schools. Geer et al. (2017) state features such as portability, touch screen display, ease of use, long battery life, and affordable hardware and software are some of the features that have led to the increasing popularity of the iPad in schools (Geer et al., 2017). It was also stated that simply having an iPad alone will not make a difference in student learning, but rather how the educators use the iPad in the classroom will be the biggest factor (Geer et al., 2017).

The research in this section shows that meaningful activities on the iPad that increase student knowledge and spark interest to create a student centered classroom. With the potential of the iPad and other portable devices in classrooms it is important that teachers incorporate these tools into their daily lesson plans to extend student learning and to prepare students for future learning experiences and careers that may require them to have knowledge of iPad and computer programs.

By reviewing the benefits of the workshop model, administrators and professional development coordinators can begin to think about how they can extend these readers' and writers' workshops through the use of technology. After training on technology devices teachers can begin to think about how they can increase student engagement, quality of work, and overall literacy skills of their students while using technology during the workshop (The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020).

**Teachers and technology.** Tamar Levin and Rivka Wadmany (2006) explored the elevation of teachers' beliefs on learning and teaching in a technology based classroom environment, and explored integrating technology-rich and information-rich tasks being incorporated into the school curriculum. Like many other teachers, the participants participated in professional development opportunities throughout the year. Levin & Wadmany noted that teachers tend to adopt new classroom practices based on whether the new learning practices are consistent with their personal beliefs. This shows that offering technology-based professional development as an option for teachers to participate in could lead to more teachers using technology in the classroom.

One finding of the Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow noted similar findings that technology has shifted classrooms towards student-centered teaching rather than curriculum-centered teaching (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). Through the use of technology teachers are spending more and more time working to differentiate curriculum among groups of students rather than assigning all students the same level of work. Adding

technology into the classroom can help with differentiation in many ways including assistive technology features and applications for students with special needs.

In Levin and Wadmany (2006), elementary teacher participants spent three years studying the evolution of teachers' beliefs regarding learning, teaching, and technology in their instructional practices while integrating technology-based and information-rich tasks in 4th-6th grade classrooms. In the study, six teachers were selected from an elementary school and given questionnaires at the beginning and end of the three year period. In the first year of the study, five of the six participants considered themselves to have a Behaviorist approach to learning; that teaching was transmission of knowledge and mostly taught their classes through direct instruction.

Teachers in this study attended a workshop prior to beginning the school year, and received ongoing help by request and attended weekly in school workshops. The focus of these workshops was addressing 1) activities initiated by the teachers based on their own experiences with students, and 2) activities planned by project learners on the subjects of the basic concepts and structure of information-rich tasks, the use of information technology, and general software capabilities. While attending these workshops teachers specifically trained to design more learning activities that were labeled as "information-rich" tasks, inquiry based learning, learning new computer skills, cooperative learning in the classroom, planning and evaluating interdisciplinary learning activities, and discussion and reflection on classroom activities with focus on difficulties, problems, solutions and accomplishments (Levin & Wadmany, 2006).

Finding showed that after three years of workshops and assistance with implementing technology rich activities, five of six teachers began to adapt a Constructivist approach to learning. Levin and Wadmany developed four categories that were used in the analysis of teacher's beliefs, the categories included: behaviorist orientation, cognitive constructivist, social constructivist, and radical constructivist (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). Teachers who identified as behavior constructivists had a concept of teaching that involved passing information from teacher to student, using direct instruction models, and viewed technology as a means of practicing knowledge (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). Teachers who identified as cognitive constructivists had a teaching concept of transmitting knowledge to students, most often used collaborative learning models, and used technology when it involved practical interest when the role was communication or interpretation (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). Teachers who identified as social constructivists had a concept of teaching that involved meeting students' needs through social activities and sharing experiences (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). These teachers viewed technology as an emancipatory knowledge interest, making technology fundamental in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous actions in the social construction of human society (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). At the end of the study, fewer teachers used direct instruction practices. After the study, teachers began to provide their students with more meaningful learning experiences through collaborative learning, cognitive apprenticeship, collaborative learning, discovery learning and reflection (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). This is important because with more training in the area of technology use in the classroom

teachers can begin to shift their teaching beliefs to provide students with more meaningful learning activities.

In another study published in the *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* by Flewitt et al. (2015) teachers noted their challenges with iPads in school included the amount of out of school hours searching for applications that supported learning objectives and planning activities around different applications. Teachers also stated that they encountered technical difficulties that were disruptive to the flow of learning in the classroom (Flewitt et al., 2015). This can be problematic for teachers because a disruption in the flow of a lesson can quickly cause loss of student engagement. This information shows that more opportunities for teachers to receive training in technology would further the opportunity for more meaningful and information-rich learning experiences.

**Students and technology.** There are many benefits of using technology in the classroom. The main benefit is that students are naturally drawn to technology devices they see their friends, siblings, and family members use. Students are often excited to receive their one-to-one devices from the school or classroom teacher. The students begin to learn the responsibilities of caring for their devices including protecting it from damage, keeping it charged, and remembering to bring the device from home to school each day. Students begin to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility by being given these devices. Along with caring for their digital devices students are also expected to be knowledgeable about how to find, assess, and use digital content which is referred to as digital literacy (Kaur, 2020). Some schools have even begun to teach classes or small workshops on digital literacy. These important lessons about digital literacy can include

information about choosing reliable sources, cyberbullying, reading advertisements, privacy and security, digital activism, and producing digital information.

As students begin learning about digital literacy and responsibility for their iPads teachers can help students use this mindset to take responsibility for their own learning. Some adults are not yet experts on using technology devices, students may oftentimes be more knowledgeable and quicker to pick up skills on the devices. Using technology in the classroom provides an opportunity to shift the knowledge/power imbalance between teachers and children (Flewitt et al., 2015). This can offer young learners empowering 'expert' roles, while increasing their skills and knowledge. These expert roles may be key to engaging students who may otherwise be hard to engage.

With students already having an interest in technology tools it is important to capture this interest and bring the tools into the lessons of the classroom. Through culturally relevant teaching and incorporating technology into daily lessons teachers may see an increase in student engagement.

**Challenges with technology.** Many teachers are reluctant to use technology in their own classrooms. Oftentimes teachers are given technology tools such as an iPad or laptop, but given little to no training, workshops, or professional development to enable them to feel comfortable using these devices in their classroom.

Some of the constraining factors that affect teacher and student learning are curriculum materials that are primarily focused on paper-based activities, lack of time to explore digital resources, absence of guidance about the potential of new technologies to

promote early literacy and low confidence in using digital tools effectively in the classroom (Flewitt et al., 2015).

Because there are so many possibilities with using technology in the classroom teachers need time to build their familiarity, confidence and expertise with new media before they can begin to change their practice in ways that will raise the quality of the pupils' experience of learning with a range of technologies (Flewitt et al., 2015).

Both teachers and students will go through struggles when learning how to use the new devices. With time and practice the skills needed to complete lessons and assignments on an iPad will become easier for both teachers and students.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development must begin with training for the role of teacher through a teacher preparation program and continue throughout the course of teachers' professional service (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) defined professional development as "deepening teachers' understanding of the process of teaching and learning, and facilitating their understanding of the students whom they teach" (p.597). Professional development can take place over the summer before school returns in the fall or throughout the course of the school year during teacher workshop days where students do not attend school or through meetings before or after school. Teachers may receive professional development training about their particular content area or grade level, as well as training on culture and diversity, social emotional learning, trauma informed practices as well as training on working with students who have special needs or students who speak English as a second language.

There are many different definitions of professional development but there are two different views and motivations for professional development. One way professional development can be thought about as a process that addresses deficiency in the teacher's level of performance and working to become better at teaching in the classroom (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Another view of professional development is related to personal growth. This idea refers to the desire for a teacher to enhance their set as a way of advancing their degree of expertise in the field (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Teachers may seek this form of professional development as a way to advance their career from being a classroom teacher to becoming a school administrator.

Teachers who wish to incorporate technology into their classrooms may fall into either of these categories. Some teachers may have a self-identified lack of personal knowledge when it comes to using an iPad in the most simple ways, and other teachers may fall into the category of wanting to grow personally. These teachers may already have knowledge of how to use an iPad, but want to become experts of using it for the purpose of student learning and teach their colleagues how to also teach with technology in their classroom, or lead school wide technology based learning initiatives.

**Teachers motivations for professional development.** Teachers' own motivations may also play a role in effective professional development in the areas of technology in the classroom. In a study by Avidov-Ungar (2016) it was found that 56% of teachers had a desire to participate in professional development that would advance their teaching practices making them better classroom teachers. More than half of the teachers desired this type of professional development over other types of professional development that

would lead to more senior positions within or beyond their current school. The information in this study shows that more than half of teachers are interested in continuing to learn new strategies and teaching methods that will improve student mastery. This desire to learn could be combined with a professional development effort to educate teachers on using technology in the classroom often and effectively to promote student learning.

Technology is always changing and changes very fast, it is important for teachers to keep up with the fast pace of the technology world, as they are preparing learners to be the next generation of creators, innovators and researchers. In a study by Kuar (2020) teachers reported that they were interested in targeted professional training on how to find and use specific apps for different content areas like math or science. This shows that there are a number of interested teachers who do not yet know all of the interesting things they can do in their classroom with today's technology. Teachers who wish to develop professionally in a lateral sense rather than a hierarchical sense would benefit the most from technology related professional development. This would help teachers who plan to remain in the classroom develop the skills and knowledge necessary to create a media rich classroom environment.

**Building Teacher Confidence.** Throughout the school year teachers continue to balance lesson planning, grading, teaching, and creating meaningful classroom activities. Teachers have limited time to prepare activities and lessons and few days during the school year for planning. Teachers also struggle to balance their time for professional development to meet school, district, and state training requirements. This leaves few teachers with additional time to learn the necessary skills involved in creating a media rich

classroom. Before teachers can change their practice in ways that will raise the quality of students' experience in education with technology, many teachers need time to build their familiarity, confidence and expertise with new media (Flewitt et al., 2015).

**Student Engagement.** Engaging and motivating young readers and writers can be a challenge for many teachers. Teachers strive to create meaningful instruction and activities that address the academic standards as well as engage students in a way so that they are motivated to continue learning. Many educators have an understanding that student choice and student voice are key in classroom engagement.

In an article by Vibert and Shields (2003) it states that “engagement describes more motivation... by focusing on the extent to which students demonstrate active interest, effort, and concentration in the specific work that teachers design, engagement calls special attention to the social context that helps activate underlying motivation...” (p.221). There is evidence that motivation plays a major role in learning. The more students are engaged in a lesson or activity the more motivation they will have to complete and succeed in the activity.

**Technology and motivation.** One of the benefits of technology in the classroom is that students are able to work and rework their assignments multiple times. When working with the iPads, Flewitt et al., (2015) observed that students enjoyed the ability to undo and review stages of their work, this reduced the perceived consequences of making mistakes and appeared to increase confidence. Students in the classroom often fear that they will be mocked by their peers when their current reading or writing abilities are below grade standards or when they have their own insecurities. Technology in the classroom offers an

individualized experience where each student can work on skills at their own level and pace. The interactive nature of the iPad also allows students with shorter attention spans to engage with certain applications which helped them focus their attention for longer periods of time (Flewitt et al., 2015).

**Independence and collaboration.** One-to-one devices in the classroom offer a unique opportunity to differentiate instruction and allow students to collaborate with one another. There are many applications and programs available for students to use for reading books, or being read to through the use of an audiobook program. Students have been observed wanting to engage with the new devices, teachers have sometimes even seen students display more advanced literacy skills than staff previously gave them credit for (Flewitt et al., 2015). The ability to use different applications to find ‘just right’ books for children can offer them the privacy of reading at their independent level while completing the same assignments as their peers. For learners with both learning disabilities and physical disabilities, iPads offer more affordable and flexible learning opportunities than some other more expensive devices (Flewitt et al., 2015). The use of iPads in classrooms has also shifted the way students are viewed by their peers as a learner, technology in the classroom allowed some students to develop new identities of ‘good spellers’ or ‘more able readers’ and ‘good drawers’ (Flewitt et al., 2015). There are many different applications and programs available to allow students to each connect with material that is accessible, personally interesting and educational.

In a systematic review of 87 studies, by Eutsler (2010), that focused on students’ cognitive development, authors identified that technology was a mechanism for students to

increase peer collaboration. The iPads and other devices allow students to collaborate and communicate with their teachers and peers like never before. Through applications like Schoology, and Google Docs students can produce and share their work with classmates and teachers for immediate feedback. In a study by Flewitt et al. (2015), students were observed sharing activities, taking turns, supporting each other's learning and celebrating the success of their classmates. Teachers could then use this energy to engage and motivate students to continue learning. This not only helps the students learn the objectives for the lesson but also learn how to be supportive of their classmates. Use of iPads can also help facilitate small group work and increase communication between teachers and small groups through the use of virtual feedback. In the Flewitt et al. (2015) study it was noted that the use of iPads for class activities provided a rich platform for language and communication, collaborative problem-solving, negotiating meanings and sharing experiences.

### **Merging Technology into the Workshop**

Readers' and writers' notebooks have been seen as a tool that helps students to keep track of their work throughout the school year. As more and more schools see an increase in funding for student technology schools are shifting to a 1:1 ratio for technology devices to students many teachers are allowing students to use their iPads or Chromebooks to complete their workshop classwork. In a study by Chandler-Olcott and Storm Fink, (2015) writers' notebooks were used to support inquiry and digital composing. The study found that the success of the digital composing was largely dependent on the completion of various print-based entries in the students' notebooks. In the workshop model students

need to complete the workshop activities to be able to successfully complete a summative assessment at the end of the unit. Students used their iPads to create a digital story to follow along with their piece of writing. This idea shows that the use of technology in the classroom can offer students a broader range of activities that would not have been possible before, while keeping the traditional structure of the workshop model class. An activity like this incorporated into a writers' workshop is a step towards creating a media rich classroom. Technology in the classroom can also allow students access to different texts than those found on the classroom shelf. Through online based programs such as Libby, Overdrive, and Hoopla students can be connected to thousands of titles found at public libraries. Creating a media rich classroom is not always easy for many teachers as they balance lesson planning, teaching, and continuing education.

**Learning management systems.** Learning management systems are often online cloud based platforms or applications that allow teachers to post and assign content, communicate with students and record grades. Students can use these platforms to complete assignments, as well interact with classmates, ask questions to classmates and their teachers and receive feedback from their teachers. Some of the current popular learning management systems include Schoology, Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle, and Seesaw. These learning platforms can be engaging to students because they offer gamification, mobile learning, social learning and video conferencing.

Social media can be another way to merge technology with the workshop model. A study by Valkenberg (2009) stated that using social media in a classroom would allow users to interact and converse with one another, share their work, edit their own work and

peer review others, and give opportunities for exposure to new forms of textual, audio and visual content. Students today are already doing some of these social media activities with applications such as Schoology and Google Docs. During distance learning and the COVID-19 Pandemic 2019-2020 students were able to experience what it was like learning through education social media sites such as Schoology and Seesaw. Ch Qayyum et al.

(2016) it stated:

Students who use social media with their classwork demonstrate improved grades when compared with non-user classmates. Social media also enhances memorization of information for a long time. It provides understanding to develop relationships with class fellows about classwork and assignments. (p. 204)

## **Conclusion**

The professional literature discussed in this chapter described how the readers' and writers' workshop has been a successful model for teaching students to read and write. The literature also discusses the technology currently used in schools and how both teachers and students interact with technology, and the importance of professional development needed for training teachers to use technology in the classroom. It was noted by many teachers that technology can be challenging due to lack of confidence in using the device and lack of professional development opportunities available to teachers.

Chapter three discusses the research design framework for a project which will give teachers ideas and tools to use in their classrooms that will incorporate technology during readers' and writers' workshops. The project will be digitally available to teachers for teachers, small group professional learning communities, or available to be used for

professional development of reading and writing teachers. Teachers will be able to take what they have learned through the website and use or adapt to their classroom as needed for different grade levels or units of study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Project Description**

#### **Introduction and Rationale**

In chapter one of this capstone, I discussed how my experience as a teacher led me to be interested in the professional development of teachers in relation to technology use in the classroom. I also discussed how my interest in teaching literacy skills could be linked to incorporating technology into daily lessons in readers' and writers' workshops. These personal experiences lead me to develop the research question: *What do teachers need to know about using iPads to increase engagement in a readers' and writers' workshop?*

In chapter two I reviewed the current literature related to teaching readers' and writers' using a workshop model, technology used in schools by both teachers and students, professional development in relation to technology in the classroom, as well as student engagement and motivations. The information gained from this literature review provided the foundation for my project.

In chapter three, I will use the knowledge gained from the review of literature on the topics of technology and teacher professional development, along with student engagement and motivation, and readers' and writers' workshops to inform my study as I attempt to answer the question: *What do teachers need to know about using iPads to increase engagement in a readers' and writers' workshop?* This chapter provides a detailed overview of the project that will be completed, the research and framework, choice of method, setting and audience, as well as the timeline for implementation.

### **Research Theories**

**Constructivism.** The educational theory chosen for this project is constructivism. Constructivism is defined as "an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner" (Constructivism as a Theory for Teaching and Learning. Retrieved September 24, 2020). My hope is that by providing teachers with some of the training they need in the area of technology they will be able to incorporate more of a constructivist approach to learning in their classroom making learning more meaningful to their students.

A study by Levin & Wadmany (2006) followed the evolution of teachers beliefs on learning and teaching in the context of a technology-based classroom environment and integrating technology-based information-rich tasks in the school curriculum. During this study teachers participated in workshops, activities, and simulated learning in the areas of technology as well as design of learning activities, inquiry-based learning using technology

and discussion and reflection (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). This study followed six teachers over a three year period where they were provided support with a learning lead in addition to workshops. In the beginning of this study five of the six teachers self identified as having a behaviorist approach to learning (Levin & Waymany, 2006). At the end of the three year period all of the teachers in the study had added constructivist approaches to their teachings or had shifted from identifying as a behaviorist towards more of a constructivist concept of learning (Levin & Waymany, 2006). Similarly found in a review study that analyzed 14 qualitative studies from 2002 to 2012, focusing on teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their educational uses of technology "...technology integration can alter teachers' belief systems to become more student-centered and constructivist" (Eutsler, 2010). With the use of technology teachers were motivated to take risks and explore new pedagogical approaches (Eutsler, 2010).

My hope is that through creating this project teachers will be able to use more of a constructivist approach in the classroom. Flewitt et al. (2015) advise that before teachers can change their practice in ways that will raise the quality of students' experience in education, teachers need time to build their familiarity, confidence and expertise with new media. It was found that after receiving training on the use of technology in the classroom the instruction practices of the teacher began to change. This shows that after receiving training with technology teachers are open to changing their current practices. Teachers began providing their students with more meaningful learning experiences through collaborative learning, cognitive apprenticeship, collaborative learning, discovery learning and reflection with the use of technology in the classroom (Levin & Wadmany, 2006).

In the research by Flewitt et al. 2015 it has been noted that although teachers may be given the tools to complete digital activities in their classrooms, they may not have been given the training to use these tools effectively to promote student learning and literacy. This project will provide teachers with training on just some of the digital tools that can be used in the classroom to increase student engagement. My hope is that this project will give teachers some of the necessary skills, and tools they may need to advance their teaching and incorporate the use of technology to promote literacy and student engagement in their classrooms.

### **Project description**

The project completed is a website using Wix.com. The website can be used by administrators and teachers for professional development and teacher training purposes. This project has online resources that could be used in a readers' and writers' workshop or adapted to be used in other content areas. This project provides teachers with training to develop effective practices in the classroom that involve the use of technology.

The two main sections of the website are a resource bank for teachers. This resource bank has a combination of links to materials that have been created and shared online by others. The resource bank is most beneficial to teachers who are learning to use an iPad for educational purposes for the first time, or need more information about the basics of using the iPad.

The second section of this project are the templates for a digital readers' and writers' notebook, along with a complete downloadable digital notebook. This section is

aimed towards classrooms where each student has their own iPad and the teacher has both an iPad and a laptop. The templates will be completed using Google Slides which has similar features as Microsoft PowerPoint. Google Slides have been chosen as the platform for creating these digital templates and notebook pages because it is free for users with a Gmail account, and it allows online sharing and commenting between the teacher and student, as well as opportunities for sharing peer to peer, and peer editing. The Google Slides' view and comment only feature will allow students to share work with their classmates. Their classmates can then make comments about their work, without editing or changing the original author's work.

### **Setting**

This project was developed with the focus of a middle school located in St. Paul, Minnesota. The student population of the school consists of students who identify as 45.5% African American, 24.3% Caucasian American, 13.6% Asian American, 9.2% Hispanic American, and 1.4% American Indian. Of the students in the school 10.2% receive special education services, 64.6% of students use free and reduced lunch programs, and 10.9% of students are English Language Learners. This school has 39 licensed teachers and 13 other licensed and non-licensed staff.

The school follows the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB-MYP), and is the first site to participate in this program in the school district. The IB-MYP program focuses on the fundamental concepts on intercultural awareness, holistic education and communication, which has been said to help give learners a broad, worldview education. The school is also home to the school district's middle level French

immersion program, although not all students in the school participate in the French immersion program.

### **Audience**

This project was aimed at general education elementary and middle school teachers who teach a readers' and/or writers' workshop. The content and strategies are mostly aimed at students in the upper elementary to middle school age group, but content can be adapted and used with any age group. The overgoal of this project is to provide educators with the resources they need to advance the use of technology in their classrooms. The website is most beneficial to classroom teachers to provide them with training on how to use technology in the classroom to enhance their daily lessons and units. This project may also be interesting to school administrators, professional learning community leaders, and paraprofessionals, or parents who are helping their children with distance learning.

The activities in this project require that teachers or schools have a classroom set of iPads or a 1:1 iPad ratio for students. In order for teachers to use other resources included in this project they may need to have a SMART Board, Projector, iPad and/or laptop.

### **Timeline**

The development of the project took place over the Fall 2020 semester and will be completed by the end of the semester in mid December 2020. Wix.com was used to create the website. Wix is a cloud based website development program which offers free website hosting or paid website hosting with a custom URL name.

During the month of September, I began the planning of the core layout of my website including planning what all of the main sections will be. During October, I created

the teacher resource bank, and during November, I developed and uploaded the digital writers' and readers' notebook materials, and December was used to finalize the website and prepare for making it viewable to the public.

Along with creating the digital notebook pages that will be used for the readers' and writers' notebook created a section that describes my capstone and student experience at Hamline University, the research, and an about me section where I will introduce myself as a student and teacher. Future plans include a section that could be expanded as a blog to continue to add to the resources on the website after my project is completed.

August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete content revisions and receive expert feedback</li> <li>- Begin planning core layout</li> </ul>
September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin designing website</li> </ul>
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin building Teacher Resource Bank</li> <li>- Begin writing chapter 4</li> </ul>
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin creating digital readers' and writers' notebook</li> </ul>
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete all written work and final updates to the website</li> <li>- Submit Capstone Project</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Chapter three focused on the overview of the capstone project. Along with ideas of the website development, chapter three has also included research theories, a description

of the intended setting, a target audience that will be viewing the project and a timeline for the completion of the project.

In the next chapter, I reflect on what I have learned throughout the process of reviewing the literature, creating the website and reviewing feedback from teachers and students. In the next chapter I also include new connections I have made during the process of creating my project and the next steps for classroom teachers and future researchers.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Reflection**

During chapter four of this paper I reflect on the research question for my capstone project: *What do teachers need to know about using iPads for engagement in a readers' and writers' workshop.* When I began this project I was teaching special education for 6th grade students with learning disabilities and other health disabilities. I co-taught four sections of reader's and writer's workshop that grouped special education students with mainstream students and offered extra support in the classroom. One of the main supports offered to students was through the use of assistive technology and modifications that involved using technology.

This experience of working with students using technology made me interested in completing a project that provided resources to other teachers that would help them use

technology in the classroom. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in spring of 2020 my students left school and began distance learning. During this time I noticed that many of my peers were struggling to teach due to the high demands of distance learning and lack of knowledge around the technology tools that can be used for teaching. My students also struggled to complete basic school work because they had not had the experience of using their district provided iPads for school work.

### **Chapter Review**

The following section will give a brief overview of each chapter in this capstone paper.

**Chapter One, Introduction.** Chapter one provided an introduction, rationale and context which led me to my research question. The decision to focus on my research question was developed from my personal and professional experiences in working with upper middle school students.

**Chapter Two, Literature Review.** Chapter two provided a review of the research from experts in the field of reading, writing, and technology. The literature focuses on the benefits of the readers' and writers' workshop model and how technology is, at the time of this capstone, being used in schools, professional development for teachers in the area of technology, and how technology can increase student engagement.

**Chapter Three, Project Description.** Chapter three of this paper provided an overview of the project completed. During this chapter I indicated that the intended audience for this project is teachers looking to incorporate digital tools into their reading and writing workshops. Chapter three also highlighted the constructivist theory.

**Chapter Four, Reflection.** This chapter provides a personal and academic reflection of what I have learned during my two semesters completing my capstone project. This project was completed based on the research question: *What do teachers need to know about using iPads for engagement in a readers' and writers workshop?* Chapter four also includes a review of the research and analysis of the literature that was reviewed to add expert voices into the project. I reflect on the importance of the question and research behind it, on the implications and limitations that occurred while completing the project. I also reflect on the successes of the project and setbacks that occurred.

### **Major Learnings**

The following sections will give an overview of major learnings from the research process associated with this project and a reflection of personal growth while completing the project.

**Research.** As a teacher one of the things I have heard people say over and over again is that the opportunity for student choice and student voice in the classroom is important. In the article by Taylor and Nesheim (2000) their study followed students who were emerging readers. In the study many of the students enjoyed choosing their own book from the classroom library or from the school library. The researchers found that offering choice led to more engagement and interest by students. Students were also encouraged to share their reactions, make connections between what they read in class and their life at

home (Taylor & Nesheim, 2000). Much like the findings of Demma (2018), Taylor & Nesheim found that offering students choice in a workshop model class was a way to increase student engagement. Something that will be important for educators to remember is that all students may not want to use an for all learning activities. Educators should be mindful of this and provide students with alternative options where they will be able to choose the way that they would like to show their learning and growth.

Throughout my research the fact that stood out to me the most was that simply having an iPad alone will not make a difference in student learning, but rather how the educators use the iPad in the classroom will be the biggest factor (Geer et al., 2017). This made me reflect on how I personally used the iPad for teaching and learning activities. Teachers need to create meaningful activities on the iPad that increase student knowledge and spark interest to create a student centered classroom. Teachers also need to be knowledgeable of the tools and accessibility features on iPads and other mobile devices that will assist students. With the potential of the iPad and other portable devices in classrooms it is important that teachers incorporate these tools into their daily lesson plans to extend student learning and to prepare students for future learning experiences and careers that may require them to have knowledge of iPad and computer programs.

**Personal Growth.** Throughout the process of writing my capstone paper and completing my project I have learned that the most important thing is to continue trying to learn new things. When I started this project I was very optimistic about my ability to complete such a large project. As time went on things became more and more challenging

leading to slower progress and a feeling of wanting to disconnect from the course. This is partially due to losing my teaching job during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout my educational experience I have always preferred writing over any other form of assessment. Starting to write chapter one came fairly easy to me because it was about my own personal experiences. When beginning to write chapter two I found myself struggling with the amount of time it took to read research articles and find the information I was looking for. What helped me the most during chapter two writing was creating a web map with all my important facts and later turning that web map into an outline for the chapter.

As I continued writing my paper, I thought that writing chapter three, came fairly easily to me as well. From the beginning of my capstone courses I had planned to create a website as the project. I thought a website would be the best for my project because my project focuses on helping teachers advance their skills with technology. As a teacher I thought there would be many skills that I have learned throughout the process of creating a website that I may be able to use in my classroom at some point. I have created a website once in my professional experience however it was not related to education. I thought this would be a good opportunity to practice making a website. Throughout the process of creating my website I thought about things I may want to do or include if I ever create my own website for my classroom.

### **Project Development**

Deciding to create a website was the first idea I had for this project. In the past I have created a website for a dance studio that I worked at. I had enjoyed the opportunity to

use my digital design skills to update their website, making it more modern and functional. I decided to use Wix for this project because it was the same platform that I have used in the past, so I was somewhat familiar with the online development program. However, when I had previously used Wix I had used it on a laptop computer. While beginning my capstone I began working with an iPad pro, which worked great for typing my actual capstone paper.

When I started creating the website on an iPad Pro, I began to struggle and really became discouraged because everything was just a little bit different than what I was used to previously designing a website on a laptop computer. Due to the functions of the mobile website, I decided to switch to using a laptop to finish my website. It was very frustrating for me to try to complete the website using my iPad because it just did not work the way I wanted. Once I switched to working on a laptop creating the website was fun and the Wix website development program was very easy to use. This is something that I will consider when I assign digital tasks to students and make sure that the platforms I choose are fully compatible with mobile devices. I experienced some of the same frustrations my own students may face when asked to use sites that work best in a full desktop version.

### **Project Implications**

My hope for my website is that teachers will find it helpful when looking to learn new ways to incorporate technology into their classroom. I hope that educators will look to this website when looking for digital activities to include in their classroom. Educators will be able to learn new skills and download resources that will be able to help them incorporate technology into their classrooms.

## **Project Limitations**

In a study by Geer et al. (2017) it was stated that just having an iPad or digital device does not make a difference in student learning; rather, the biggest factor contributing to an increase in student engagement and learning was how the educators used the iPad as a tool in the classroom (Geer et al., 2017). This means although digital devices are available to students, it is the way that teachers choose to use them in the classroom that makes the most difference.

Further research needs to be done to ensure that educators are provided with the correct resources and support they need to meet students needs, and increase engagement in reader's and writer's workshops. Resources that teachers may need could be considered many things from the actual digital devices itself, to accesses to different applications that can be used during learning activities. Smaller school districts, charter schools and private schools may not have the resources to provide their students with these resources due to limited financial resources. In this situation teachers are limited to the number of devices they may have access to or may be limited to free versions of learning apps.

## **Communicating Project Results**

Communicating the existence and access to this website is an important part of providing educators access to learning resources. When choosing what platform to build the website, something I considered was the ability for internet users to access the website. Wix.com websites are easily accessible to all internet users with a Google search using specific key words. The key words that I included in this were: digital learning, school technology, classroom technology, distance learning, ipads, and ipad learning. Another

reason that I chose to use Wix to host my website was because they offer the ability to email users and let them know that the website is available for use. This is another way that the information will reach educators at all grade levels, and possibly reach parents who may be homeschooling their kids, or anyone else who may be browsing trying to learn more about technology. Through the use of social media I will also be able to have my website reach more people. Using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter are other ways that I will be able to make educators aware of the resources available on my website.

### **Benefits to the Teaching Profession**

The website created throughout the course of this capstone project will benefit teachers and administrators. Administrators will be able to research different learning management systems that can help their teachers incorporate digital curriculum into their classroom leading to an increase in student engagement. Teachers will also benefit from learning about the different programs and applications available to them and how to use these platforms in their classroom. With administrators and teachers learning more about digital tools available to them they will be able to expand the learning opportunities in the classroom, increase student engagement, and increase literacy skills.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a concluding reflection of the capstone process, and included significant learnings I have gained from the experience not only as an educator, but also as a student, researcher, and writer. This chapter also revisited the literature currently available on the topic of iPads in schools, readers' and writers' workshops, and professional

development in the areas of technology as it is used in schools. Chapter four has also touched on the limitations and implications of the project, and how the website will be conveyed to other educators. After completing this project I personally hope to expand the ways I use technology in the classroom and hope other teachers who have read my capstone will too. I hope that others who are interested in the field of research will continue to expand on the ways that technology can be used in the classroom to increase student engagement and literacy skills.

#### REFERENCES

- Alberta Education (n.d.) What is literacy? Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://education.alberta.ca/literacy-and-numeracy/literacy/everyone/what-is-literacy/>
- Atwell, N. (1987). *In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents*. Upper Montclair, N.J: Boynton/Cook.
- Britten, J., & Cassady, J. (2005). The technology integration assessment instrument: Understanding planned use of technology by classroom teachers. *Computers in the Schools*, 22(3-4), 49–61. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J025v22n03\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J025v22n03_05)

- Brown, K. (2018). Scaffolding and Lucy Calkins writers workshop: A case study in first grade. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.
- Cartwright, K., Marshall, T., & Wray, E. (2015). A longitudinal study of the role of reading motivation in primary students' reading comprehension: Implications for a less simple view of reading. *Reading Psychology, 37*(1), 55–91.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2014.991481>
- Ch Qayyum, A., Hussain, T., Mahmood, Z., & Shafqat Rasool, M. (2016). A comparative study between the learning style of user and non user students of social media at elementary school level. *Bulletin of Education and Research, 38*(2), 203–209.
- Chandler-Olcott, K. & Storm Fink, L. (2015). Using writers' notebooks to support inquiry and digital composing. *Voices from the Middle, 23*(2), 56–61.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(8), 597+.  
[https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A16834863/GPS?u=clic\\_hamline&sid=GPS&xid=46155f13](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A16834863/GPS?u=clic_hamline&sid=GPS&xid=46155f13)
- De Naeghel, J., Van Keer, H., Vansteenkiste, M., & Rosseel, Y. (2012). The relation between elementary students' recreational and academic reading motivation, reading frequency, engagement, and comprehension: A self-determination theory perspective. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*(4), 1006–1021.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027800>
- Demma, M. (2018). Redesigning writers' workshop to enhance engagement. *The Reading Teacher, 72*(2), 263–263. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1725>

- Dobler, E. (2011). Using iPads to promote literacy in the primary grades. *Reading Today*, 29(3), 18–19.
- Elliott, A. (2012). Effects on first graders' independent reading engagement using readers' workshop. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.
- Eutsler, M. (2020). The Influence of Mobile Technologies on Preschool and Elementary Children's Literacy Achievement: A Systematic Review Spanning 2007-2019. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 68(4), 1739–1768.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09786-1>
- Flewitt, R., Messer, D., & Kucirkova, N. (2015). New directions for early literacy in a digital age: The iPad. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 15(3), 289–310.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798414533560>
- Jarvis, L. (2018). The effects of the reader's workshop on a fourth grader's attitude and engagement about reading. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.
- Kaur, D. (2020). Post-positivist approach to factors that influence K-12 teachers' use of iPads and Chromebooks. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(1), 26-36.
- Leigh, S. (2015). "I'm a writer. But I'm an artist, too. Look at my artist's notebook": Developing voice through art and language. *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.21977/d911112204>
- Mason, Z. (2013). Readers' workshop and its impact on students' personal beliefs about reading. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.

- Orit Avidov-Ungar (2016) A model of professional development: teachers' perceptions of their professional development, *Teachers and Teaching*, 22:6, 653-669, DOI: 10.1080/13540602.2016.1158955
- Simply Psychology (n.d.) *Constructivism as a Theory for Teaching and Learning*. Retrieved September 24, 2020. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/constructivism.html>
- Taylor, S.V. & Nesheim, D.W. (2000). Making literacy real for "high-risk" adolescent emerging readers: An innovative application of readers' workshop. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 44(4), 308-318.
- Taylor, S.V. & Nesheim, D.W. (2001). Creating meaning in a readers' workshop. *Principal Leadership*, 2(2), 47-51.
- Units of Study (n.d.) The Reading and Writing Workshop Framework and Environment. Retrieved July 6, 2020, from <http://unitsofstudy.com/framework>
- Vaughan, M., Beers, C., & Burnaford, G. (2015). The impact of iPads on teacher educator practice: A collaborative professional development initiative. *International Journal of Technology in Teaching and Learning*, 11(1), 21-34.
- Vibert, A., Shields, C. (2003). Approaches to student engagement: Does ideology matter? *McGill Journal of Education*, 38(2), 221-.
- Wuryani, & Yufiarti. (2017). The effect of teaching methods and learning styles on capabilities of writing essays on elementary school's students in East Jakarta. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 12(12), 635-642.