

# iLOVE Writing:

## Using the iPad to Support Struggling Writers

Are you working with students who struggle with the process of writing? Does their spelling impact the readability of their work? Would you like for them to be more efficient and independent writers?

Students have had access to computers and software for years, supporting their academic independence and achievement. Graphic organizers, text-to-speech and word prediction can support many students (not just those identified with learning differences).

...If we move to a different medium, these tools are just as powerful!

Today, iPads are changing the landscape of the 21st century classroom and becoming an invaluable tool to all students, particularly to those who learn differently. Given that many students are digital learners, they are embracing this new technology, which is socially acceptable and easy to use. Teachers are finding creative ways to integrate iPads into daily instruction and independent learning activities, making the learning environment richer and more diverse.

However, there are some things we must consider when using the iPad as a writing tool:

Although many students are already using touch technologies, we must acknowledge that there will be some new learning. Using the iPad to play Angry Birds is different than completing a history essay!

Accessing the iPad can be physically difficult for some students. Therefore, use of alterna-

tive keyboards, stands, and/or styluses can be helpful.

The virtual keyboard presents a challenge for many students due to sensory factors, the visual presentation (which also requires a different motor pattern) and the inability to "touch type."

Printing from the device requires a compatible WiFi printer or the use of e-mail ... this can be a challenge if the student is in a location with limited or no Internet access.

With hundreds of thousands of apps on the market, it is difficult to know which ones can be most beneficial to the students you are working with.

### APPS FOR ORGANIZATION

#### Inspiration Maps

This app has a presentation that is very similar to the computer-based software, so transitioning students to the iPad is easier. It offers templates in a variety of areas or allows you to create your own. The best

part of the app is that (like the computer software) it allows you to switch between diagram and outline views.

#### Tools4Students

This app has 25 different organizers, including Character, Drawing Conclusions, Cause/Effect, Main Idea/Detail, Sequencing and Making Predictions. There is a space provided for responses and book/page numbers when appropriate. The organizers can be used again and again.

### APPS FOR WORD PROCESSING

#### Writings

This app is customizable in many ways! It contains multiple fonts, and the font size can be adjusted up to 40-point. (Great for our students with visual impairments!) Background and text color can be changed and page width adjusted. This app also provides a visual word count and offers an additional



Inspiration Map's Diagram and Outline Views



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keyboard with commonly used keys (i.e. semicolon, quotation marks and parentheses).

### NewPad Plus

This word processing app also provides speech feedback to support writing and editing. Additional features include: a text editing toolbar that allows you to apply styles to text, such as bold, italic, underline and strikethrough; highlighting of text in multiple colors; a keyboard with left/right arrow keys for text navigation; definitions of words within the app; and superscript and subscript of numbers.

### Typ-O HD

This word processing app contains both speech feedback and word prediction. Even better, the word prediction offers support for phonetic spelling, has a "Predict Next Word" feature, allows predicted words to be spoken prior to selection and allows users to add words to the prediction list via speech-to-text!

### Clicker Docs

This app provides speech feedback (three voice choices) with highlighting and context-based word prediction (up to eight choices), with the added feature of word banks. There are ready-made word banks, or customized word banks can be created. Clicker Docs will also automatically develop word banks from pasted text anywhere on your iPad, including any Web browser, such as Safari, and the app allows users to access word banks from Crick's LearningGrids from within the app. For those students with visual impairments, the font can be adjusted up to 70-point. Two notes of caution: the word bank and the keyboard are not visible at the same time, and the word prediction does not typically offer choices for phonetically spelled words.

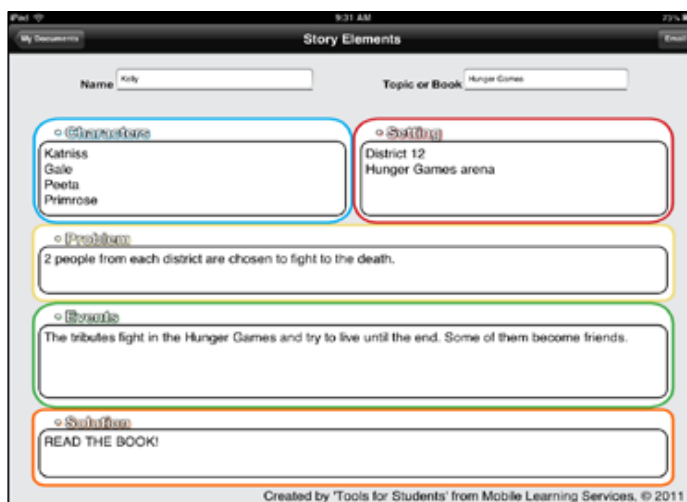
### PaperHelper

This app splits the iPad screen in half to give students simultaneous access to an Internet browser and a word processing document (placement of windows can be "swapped" left to right). Additional features include:

- Internet Browser:
  - Allows users to create Bookmarks and identify five Favorites
  - Allows printing of Web pages to a wireless printer from within the app
- Document:
  - Gives users access to commonly used editing tools (i.e. the ability to bold/italicize, change the font and font size, justification)
  - Font size can be adjusted
  - Three fonts available (Arial, Helvetica, Verdana)
  - Nine text colors available
  - Keeps a word/character count

### PaperPort Notes

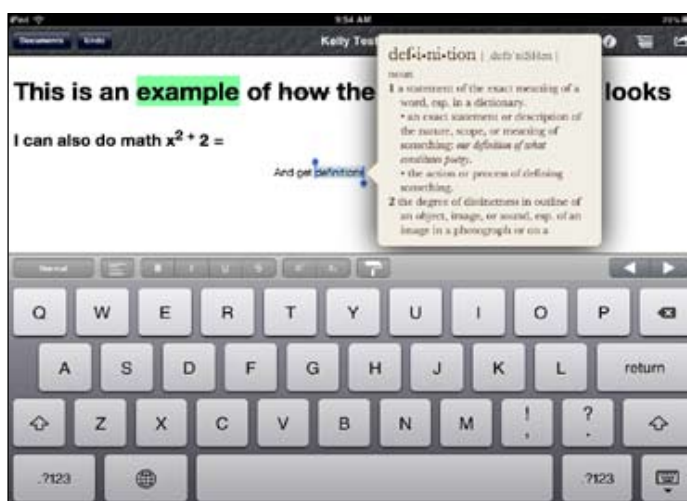
This multi-function word processing app presents visually, like the native iOS Notes app. It includes built-in speech recognition (even if you are using an iOS device without Siri). This app also allows users to create audio recordings, draw illustrations, highlight their work (five different colors are available), utilize "sticky notes" and create text boxes. It also supports picture imports.



Story Elements Template in Tools4Students



Writings app keyboard



NewPad Plus Screenshot

## USING THE IPAD CAMERA TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

Some students struggle with capturing information from the board in a timely and/or legible manner. The iPad's built-in camera can help! Consider having students capture information from the board (i.e. illustrations, homework assignments) that they may have difficulty copying, by taking a photo of it. For students with visual impairments, this is a particularly helpful strategy because they can then use the built-in Zoom feature to magnify it to meet their visual needs.

## SUMMARY

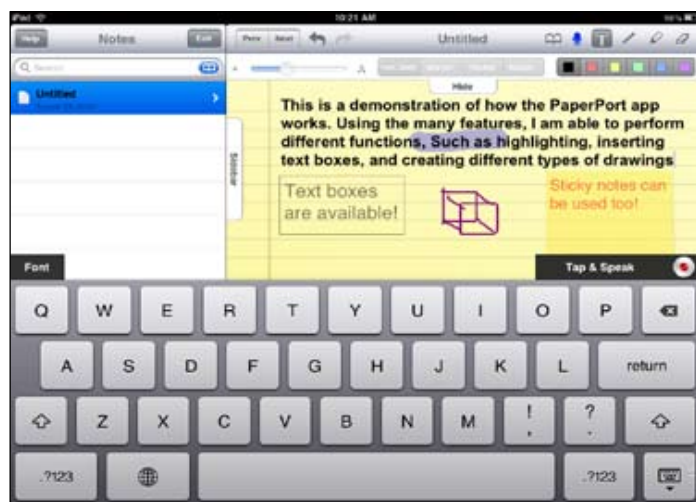
The iPad is a wonderful tool to support writing. Apps exist to support students of all ages with all aspects of the writing process. Apps should be selected based on a student's skills and needs and trialed and monitored to insure their appropriateness. And we must acknowledge that although many students are adept at using touch technologies, they will still need support to utilize these tools effectively. But with the right apps and the right supports, you just might hear your students say "iLOVE Writing!" ■



Typ-O HD Screenshot



Clicker Docs Word Bank screen



PaperPort Notes screen shot



PaperHelper Screen Shot