

iPads for School Counselors: Productivity and Practice

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Abstract

This article reviews 20 uploadable iPads applications (apps) that provide school counselors diverse options to use in any phase of the comprehensive school counseling program. A brief explanation of each app is presented, and the cost and web address for acquisition are provided in the appendix. This information can be a helpful guide to the busy school counselor who understands the need for technology in his or her school counseling program as a way to engage students. Ethical issues related to iPad use by school counselors are also addressed.

Keywords: iPad, school counselor, technology, applications, counseling

iPads for School Counselors: Productivity and Practice

With increasing advancements in technology, the Apple iPad offers school counselors a tool that has the potential to increase productivity and improve practice. The iPad provides school counselors with new strategies that can be used to communicate with a generation of students that grew up using technology from an early age. M-learning (or mobile learning) refers

to “the advantages afforded by mobile technologies” in the learning environment (Manuguerra & Petocz, 2011, 1). Creative use of the iPad can be one form of implementing M-learning. M-learning affords the school counselor with multiple ways to interact with students in the classroom, group setting, and individually. iPads are a means to tap into the technology skills of school counselors and students in a way that can engage students in academic, personal/social, and career digital interventions. The portability of the iPad makes it an excellent technology tool that a school counselor can access anywhere in the school.

Currently, there are approximately 1.5 million iPads being used in the educational setting (Rao, 2012). The education applications or apps available on the iPad exceed 20,000. Apps (applications) are software programs that are found on mobile devices. Many of these apps can potentially assist the school counselor in meeting the needs of students more effectively. While the apps specific to school counseling are limited, many of the productivity apps and educational apps can be modified to be functional for school counselors. An added advantage in the use of iPads in school counseling activities is the potential to result in students becoming more quickly engaged in the school counselor’s interventions for a longer period of time.

Productivity Applications

Productivity apps can help school counselors optimize their time. There are numerous apps that are relevant to the job of the school counselor. This article describes ten apps that have the potential to increase productivity. Appendix A contains the name of the application, the cost, and the developer. The ten apps are **Safari (Internet), Email, Logmein, Drop Box, IAnnotate PDF, Keynote, Evernote, Quickoffice Pro, Language Translator, and Dragon Dictation.**

There are several applications that could help increase the productivity of school counselors by allowing access to information, documents, and PDFs. iPads come with **Safari**

already loaded allowing immediate access to the internet as long as a wireless connection is available. This software provides school counselors with access to student records outside their office, email, and any other online resources that are needed without returning to their office. **Email** can also be set up so that the same emails that are delivered to a desktop computer or laptop will also be delivered to an iPad. **Logmein Ignition** provides remote access to other computers available to the school counselor. School counselors can be at home or another part of the building and remotely access another computer to retrieve a document or check information, even make and save changes to a document. Files can also be managed using **Logmein Ignition** (Logmein, 2012). **Drop Box** is a file sharing service that provides an online storage folder that allows the school counselor to drop a file in the folder then access on another computer, smartphone, or iPad with an internet connection. The file could be a document, PDF file, photo or video (Dropbox, 2011). A guidance lesson plan could be dropped into the folder then shared with the classroom teacher to determine if the teacher would like any changes in the lesson. **IAnnotate** is a tool that can be used to read, comment, and share PDF files. School counselors can also write or draw on a PDF file using their finger. Files can be tabbed so that it is easy to return to a certain part of the document. Once comments and changes are made the file can be emailed to another individual (Branchfire, 2012). A PDF file with an activity could be developed to use in an individual counseling activity. The student could complete the activity using his/her finger to write and review with the school counselor.

Keynote is a presentation tool that school counselors can use to develop, deliver, and share presentations. Photographs can be loaded into the presentation while charts and graphs can be created with this application. With a tap of the finger slides can be edited and organized. Animation can be used to increase the effectiveness of the presentation. **Keynote Remote** is an

accessory that can be used to control the presentation as you walk around the room (Apple, 2011). Keynote can be used to deliver classroom guidance lessons by connecting the iPad to a projector in the classroom. **Evernote** is an application that provides school counselors with a place in the iPad to take notes and create digital notebooks. This software uses technology to help users “organize various types of information from several different sources into one, central, web-based location. The product also allows users to clip web pages and archive them for later reference, store screen shots, photos and text notes, all within a customizable storage system” (Productivity501, 2012). **Evernote** will also organize information for you by the date a note or other document was created. In addition, notes/notebooks can be searched, organized, and synched with another computer (Evernote, 2012). School counselors could use **Evernote** to create blogs that can then be added to the school counselor’s website. **Quickoffice Pro** is a technology tool that lets the user create, access, and share Microsoft Office files. Documents, excel sheets, and Powerpoints can be created and edited from the iPad, put in Dropbox and shared with other Dropbox users and computers (Quickoffice, 2011). This app increases the ability of school counselors to create and access documents anywhere there is an internet connection.

myLanguage Translator Pro is an application that translates sentences or words in 59 different languages. The translation is returned in writing and in audio. An internet connection is required for audio translation (myLanguage Pro, 2011). School counselors struggling with understanding non-English speaking students can use this application to increase communication between the counselor and student. **Dragon Dictation** is a voice recognition application that allows you to speak and instantly the user will see an email or text message. **Dragon Dictation** is five times faster than typing on a keyboard. It can also be used for social networking or to

creating notes. You can also paste text developed in **Dragon Dictation** to other applications using the clipboard (Nuance, 2012). This particular application increases the mobility of school counselors and allows for multi-tasking.

Practice Applications

Similar to productivity apps, there are hundreds of apps that could potentially be used in the practice of school counseling. The ten apps that will be discussed related to school counseling practice are **Smack talk, Puppet Pals HD, Social Express Lite, You Can Handle Them All, ICDL, Scribble Press, BeSeen, Guidance Counselor, Petersons College Guide, and Super Duper Data Tracker**. There are also numerous free games and books that can be downloaded to the iPad and used when working with students such as racing games, puzzles, and chess.

School counselors frequently use puppets to help children address problems or as part of group and classroom guidance. Two puppet apps that can be downloaded to the iPad are **Smacktalk** and **Puppet Pals**. The **Smacktalk** application has three different animals, a hamster, a dog, and a cat that mimic whatever the user says in whatever language is selected. Children can create stories, read them to one of the animals, and whatever the child reads is stated back to him or her (Marcus Satellite, 2011). This app could be used to build rapport with a child, as a reward, or to help children tell their stories. **Puppet Pals** is a cartoon/animation application that allows the user to create stories using the characters provided by the app. The user selects the characters, moves them around on the set, and provides their voice. Once the story is finished, a video is created with all the characters, movements and speech that the user created (Polished Play, 2011). This application would be beneficial to use as a group activity requiring the students to address role play topics or when working with individual students.

You Can Handle Them All is an app for managing student behavior. One hundred and twenty-four behaviors identified as problem behaviors are available in the app. For each behavior, a primary cause is listed along with actions that can be taken to address the behavior. In addition, related behaviors are cross referenced (The Master Teacher, 2011). This application provides school counselors with a quick resource to respond to student inappropriate behavior or to help teachers manage problem behaviors in the classroom. The purpose of the **Social Lite Express** app is to help children and adolescents who have difficulty in social situations to learn how to function appropriately in these situations. **Social Lite Express** uses “best practices and programs that feature cognitive behavioral techniques and virtual strategies including social stories” (Social Express Lite, 2011, 1). Social issues addressed include identifying feelings in others, nonverbal language, coping strategies, social cues, and social conversation. This application would be appropriate for the school counselor to use with any student that struggles in social situations.

ICDL-International Children’s Digital Library is a source of free books for children that can be downloaded to the iPad. Books are available from over sixty countries. Many of the books have been translated into other languages making this app useful for working with children when English is not their native language (ICDL, 2008). This resource helps the school counselor find resources that support an issue germane to the school counseling program including classroom guidance activities, group sessions, or individual counseling. Another tool that can be used to work with children is **Scribble Press** (Scribble Press, 2012). This tool allows the user to create stories on the iPad. The stories can be created or there are 50 templates in the app that can be used to create a story. In addition, the app includes drawing tools, such as markers and stamps, a photo library, and a sharing tool that allows the creator to share the story created

(teacherswithapps, 2012). School counselors could develop stories specific to a child's situation or when needed help the child to create a story. **Scribble Press** could also be used to journal. The purpose of the **BeSeen** app is to teach kids internet safety. The app uses a social networking video game that teaches users how to post appropriate public and personal information on the internet. The app also teaches users how to protect themselves and same age peers in situations such as cyberbullying, slander, and revealing personal information (BeSeen, 2011). This is a resource that could be used in individual counseling and group counseling to help students understand the dangers of the internet.

The **Guidance Counselor** app allows the user to take a career assessment that results in a list of careers that match the user's interests. From this list a second list is generated indicating schools that offer degrees in a selected career interest where the student can then request further information from that school. The user can also browse a variety of professions and find schools that offer degrees in a particular profession. The app also provides an option to call a live advisor to answer additional questions. This app quickly provides the school counselor with a tool to assess students' career interests and provide further information about colleges and universities that offer degrees related to jobs in a student's area of interest (Guidance Counselor, 2010).

Peterson's College Guide provides the user with information on over 4000 two and four-year colleges in the United States. The information includes: the type of school, setting, degrees offered, cost of tuition, entrance difficulty, average admission GPA and SAT scores, and athletic information. In addition, the user can search by several different criteria such as size of the school, location of the school, tuition and majors offered. For those planning on visiting colleges, the application can also map a route from one university to the next. This is a quick and easy app

that school counselors can use to help students gain information about different colleges (Peterson's Nelnet, 2009).

Super Duper Data Tracker is a means to record and document data for students. For example, pre/post-test scores, grades, and goals can be recorded and tracked in the application. Students can be labeled individually or custom groups can be created. If using the app to record pre/post data, the school counselor can set the group and items up then simply tap either red or green to indicate correct or incorrect responses. **Super Duper Data Tracker** will then calculate the percentage correct (Super Duper, 2011).

Ethical Issues

The iPad is a portable technology device that may assist school counselors in being more productive and provides applications that can be useful in helping students gain information and resolve issues. However, there are ethical issues that need to be addressed when using any technology device. The American Association for School Counselors (ASCA) ethical standards that relate to the use of iPads include:

Promote the benefits of and clarify the limitations of various appropriate technological applications. Professional school counselors promote technological applications (1) that are appropriate for students' individual needs, (2) that students understand how to use and (3) for which follow-up counseling assistance is provided.

c. Take appropriate and reasonable measures for maintaining confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of computers, facsimile machines, telephones, voicemail, answering machines and other electronic or computer technology.

d. Understand the intent of FERPA and its impact on sharing electronic student records. (Technology, A.10.)

It is important for school counselors to clarify the purpose of the iPad and the limits of an application when working with children. It is also important to make sure the application is developmentally appropriate and that students understand how to use the applications they are working with in order to make the process as easy as possible. School counselors must be very aware of where they are when using the iPad, who can view the iPad when accessing and viewing students' records, and the criteria for sharing electronic records. It is equally important that once the school counselor is finished viewing student records that the screen displaying the records is closed out.

Conclusion

Technology has changed the way students in schools learn and interact. It is important that school counselors use new strategies to assist students in their academic, career, and personal/social growth. iPads have the potential to provide school counselors with strategies and the means to engage students using a format students are familiar with. In addition, the portability of the iPad can potentially increase the productivity of school counselors by allowing them to access information and work with and create documents anywhere they have an internet connection.

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Appendix A*

Application	Cost	Developer
BeSeen	Free	WebWise Kids, Inc.
Dragon Dictation	Free	Nuance Communications, Inc.
Drop Box	Free	Dropbox, Inc.
Email	Free	School Email
Evernote	Free	Evernote Corporation
Guidance Counselor	Free	OMNIPATTERNS, Inc.
IAnnotate PDF	\$9.99	Branchfire, LCC
ICDL	Free	ICDL Foundation
Keynote	\$9.99	Apple, Inc.
Logmein Ignition	Free (Logmein Ignition Pro—\$29.99)	Logmein, Inc.
myLanguage Translator Pro	Free	mylanguage Pro, Inc.
Peterson's College Guide	Free	Peterson's Nelnet, Inc.
Puppet Pals HD	Free (Director's Pass, \$2.99)	Polished Play LLC
Quickoffice Pro	\$14.99	Quickoffice, Inc.
Safari (Internet Browser)	Free	Apple, Inc.
Scribble Press	Free	Scribble Press, Inc.
Smacktalk	\$.0.99	Perfect Buzz Music
Social Express Lite	Free (to upgrade \$89.99)	The Language Express
Super Duper Data Tracker	\$5.99	Super Duper Publications
You Can Handle Them All	Free	The Master Teacher, Inc.

*i-Pad users can access apps through the App store that available on the i-Pad.