

If You Give A Mouse An iPad

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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When thinking about teaching and learning in the classroom, it is easy to forget that sometimes one of the greatest gifts we can give our young learners is a sense of empowerment. As a new school year begins, we connect and interact with students and spend quality time getting to know them. Their strengths, areas to improve, desires, aspirations, and goals set for learning become part and parcel of the community. We watch, day after day, as they work towards meeting these challenges with strength, passion, and purpose. We celebrate their successes and rally in support when they encounter obstacles in their way. It got me thinking- how do we best cultivate and nurture a spirit of perseverance in learning?

Inspiration came to me one day in the most likely of places for any teacher librarian. There, nestled between the shelves, I found a wonderful book that perfectly captured and conveyed exactly what I was thinking. As I started to flip through the pages of bestselling author and illustrator Laura J. Numeroff's classic *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*, I was taken with the determination of Mouse and his wants and wishes. What starts out as a simple cookie leads to a very engaged, independent, and energetic adventure for both Mouse and the boy.

With each and every page, we see how each *want* is really meant as more of an empowering opportunity for Mouse to grow into himself. Rather than his journey coming across as demanding and difficult, we find his explorations endearing. His story is truly intended to open our eyes to the possibilities. How best then can we afford the right supports and motivation to empower & engage our learners?

This then, is where Mouse begins a new adventure, one that entails technology as a means to deepen his skills and passion in learning:



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If you give a Mouse an iPad, he is going to ask to connect to the internet.

When you connect him to the internet, he will probably ask you to download some Apps.

When you download some Apps, he will ask if he can play on them.

Then he will want to investigate and find new & exciting discoveries.

When he looks in the App store, he might see all the different categories, games, and new features to explore.

So he will probably get excited about all the new learning he can do.

When he is done exploring the possibilities, he will want to investigate and discover what other technologies might have to offer.

He will start creating.

He might get carried away, and make for hours.

He may even decide to create an App of his very own.

When he is done, he is probably going to want to show his design to his family & friends.

You'll have to help him decide how he is going to share what he made with those around him.

He will be excited but overwhelmed all at the same time.

He will probably ask you for support on how he can model being a good digital citizen.

So you will teach him how best to leave behind a positive digital footprint.

He will be proud of his new learning.

So he will want to connect & collaborate with the world.

He found at his fingertips.

Then he will want to make and create some more.

Which means he will need...

Access to the internet.

And chances are,

He is going to need an iPad to do that.

Bringing technologies and new learning to our classrooms can prove to be a challenge, not only for ourselves, but also for our students each and every day. It is critical that we find opportunities to guide our learners as they grow their skills in taking on the challenge of being innovative. While it can feel daunting to find yourself learning something brand new for the first time, odds are you will have much in common with even the youngest learner in your community. Be brave and bold, like many a young mouse we have known, and persevere in bringing new opportunities to connect, create, nurture and grow to everyone in the classroom.