

Evaluation Write-Up

App Title: Box Island

Version: 2.2.0

Publisher/Producer/Creator: Radiant Games

Target Audience: The publisher says that it's appropriate for 4+ but made for ages 9-11. I agree that it's second grade and up for the typical student, but younger kids may be able to figure it out. It's not too hard to learn as long as they pay attention to the tutorial.

Type(s) of Software: I would say this is a problem-solving app. It teaches sequencing and planning skills through presenting a problem that the student has to figure out through trial and error. If they get it wrong, they get unlimited attempts until they get it right.

Curriculum(s): At this age, coding may not really fit into any one subject or content area. However, it's a great tool to teach students how to think, develop resilience, and other executive functioning skills, which do affect students' performance in every content area. It would be a great app to allow students to play when they finish an activity early, when they arrive at school or are waiting for dismissal, or transitioning between activities.

Cost: The free version of this app includes 70 levels to play, 10 from the Box Island part of the game, and all 60 from the Hour of Code portion (20 for ages 6-8, 20 for 9-11, and 20 for 12+). 20 more levels from the Box Island part costs \$3, 50 more costs \$6 and 90 more (the entire game) costs \$8.

Software Evaluation:

Upon opening the app, the user selects whether they want to play the Hour of Code portion or the Box Island portion. This app partners with the Hour of Code campaign to promote coding as a great means of teaching problem solving, logic, and creativity, which is why so many free levels are provided. Gameplay is the same on either side, but the Hour of Code levels are divided into age group categories. When you select the first level to play, the game takes you through a tutorial to teach you how to use the tools, and provides a tutorial whenever a new aspect of

gameplay is introduced. It's all picture-based coding. The object of the game is to get the character to collect 3 stars while avoiding obstacles or falling into the water. You select the arrow buttons and put them in order based on how you want the character to move. After several levels, looping is also introduced where the user can select the same move to be used until the character reaches a certain tile.

I like this app even though I don't really use coding or computer programming much if at all. I can see how it would be a great game to introduce students to the concept of computing as well as foster those executive functioning skills. Development of those at the elementary age is critical. I appreciate that it's simplified and picture based for those who are not reading complex text yet. I also like that there's so many levels in the free version. It makes paying for those extra levels seem completely unnecessary and also really expensive. The levels in the age groups are not restrictive. Students can select whichever they want or work through them sequentially, making it great for all skill levels.

Does the software pass **Review**? Yes

Does the software pass **Evaluation**? Yes