

Evaluation Write-Up

By:

Blakely Ellis, Robin Slinkard, and Marissa Jones

Title: PlanBoard

Version: 2.26.1 (Most recent version was to fix lesson title viewing on the timetable and minor bugs.)

Publisher/ Producer: Chalk.com Education Inc.

Target Audience: Teachers/Educators

Type(s) of Software: Tools

- PlanBoard falls under the “Tools” category because it is simply a resource for organization. The user (usually a teacher) plugs in exactly the information he/she wants, and the app organizes it according to the given templates and folders. It does not offer or prompt additional information.

Curriculum: As a lesson planner for teachers, this app easily incorporates all curriculum courses with ease. An interesting aspect is that a teacher can organize their lesson plans and schedules with Planboard on a desktop, and while in class, can access the same information through the app on a tablet so he or she can continue to be hands on with their students while having all resources at their fingertips.

Cost: Planboard is free to download, and there are no in-app purchases available.

PlanBoard is a program for teachers that allows them to plan lessons on the go. It organizes lessons, subjects, and semesters with a timetable where you can view it all one week or

day at a time. PlanBoard has a minimalist setup, and as you enter the app, you immediately view what is scheduled in your planner for that day. After clicking on the menu button in the top left, you can choose to manage templates, timetables, subjects, and semesters. There are also live support agents with Chalk that are available Monday through Friday for assistance with the app. Overall, the app is very simple and easy to use, and is basically a template for information you would normally write into a teacher planner.

This software was surprisingly easy to navigate. There were no distinct bells and whistles, but in this case, that was a good thing. Teachers can have an overwhelming amount of information to organize, and the simplicity of this app could be just what they need to gather their thoughts and calm their minds. However, it requires for the user to have all of their ideas and plans to be previously thought out. There is no thought prompting or additional resources available to help teachers think of activities or lesson plan ideas to incorporate into their classroom. Many of the reviews gave this app five stars and raved about how useful it was in the classroom, and our group concluded that we all would like to incorporate it into our own lesson planning one day.

Title: GoNoodle

Version: 3.3.0 (Most recent version was to fix minor bugs and improvements.)

Publisher/ Producer: GoNoodle, Inc.

Target Audience: Kids ages 4 and up. (Used often by elementary school teachers for their students.)

Type(s) of Software: Discovery Learning

- GoNoodle has a variety of videos ranging from mathematics to funny jokes. The user can determine what they want to watch or learn about, whether it's educational or just plain fun to watch!

Curriculum: GoNoodle has a section called “Brainercise” that could be useful for kindergarten aged children to learn motor skills. Other GoNoodle videos are not educational enough to be effectively incorporated into the curriculum.

Cost: GoNoodle is free to download, and there are no in-app purchases available.

GoNoodle is a colorful, animated resource for fun videos for children! Video topics range from calming to dance parties to brain exercises to motor skills. There is also a section of GoNoodle called !VAMOS! With videos available in Spanish. This app is like a kid-friendly YouTube that parents can trust to always have appropriate content.

Our group concluded that this app did not meet many educational needs, nor was it interactive or personalized. The visuals themselves made the app seem like there was too much going on to focus on one thing. However, we did conclude that it was a really great alternative to web pages like YouTube that have content that is hard for parents to monitor. This seems to be an app that parents can trust will produce appropriate content that engages the attention of their little one.

Title: Swift Playgrounds

Version: 3.3.1 (Most recent version was for stability improvements and bug fixes.)

Publisher/ Producer: Apple

Target Audience: Kids ages 4+.

Type(s) of Software: Tutorial

- Swift Playgrounds is a program that allows kids to learn something completely new - coding. It teaches them what coding is, how it works, and how to use it.

Curriculum: Swift Playgrounds could easily be incorporated into the curriculum. Blah blah blah

Cost: Swift Playgrounds is free to download, and there are no in-app purchases available.

Swift Playgrounds is a beginners introduction to coding. The user can choose a “Playground” in which they complete step-by-step instructions to code! The user can choose from the few given codes, create a sequence, and run it to see if it would successfully complete the given task. The activity begins with two different codes and continues to add more codes to build on complexity and understanding.

Swift Playgrounds is a well put together app. Because it is made by Apple, it resembles the simplistic template of an Apple software, which might be boring to some kids. The game is very interactive, and shows kids exactly how coding affects what you see on the screen. We all liked how straightforward the app was and didn’t include a lot of “bells and whistles” because coding can be hard enough to comprehend on its own without additional distractions.

Title: Cosmic Kids

Version: 5.902.1 (Most recent version fixed an issue affecting background audio for some users and enhanced features and bug fixes.)

Publisher/Producer: Cosmic Kids

Target Audience: Teachers, Educators, and Students

Type(s) of Software: Simulation

- Cosmic Kids falls under the “Simulation” category because the app allows kids to role play while learning yoga. Teachers can pick an object of category to focus on, and students can role play while doing different yoga poses. For example, if the teacher is teaching a lesson on the jungle. He or she could put on Cosmic Kids video on Jungle Animals, and the students could follow along and do different animal poses while simultaneously learning about the different creatures in the jungle.

Curriculum: Cosmic Kids can fit the curriculum for students in many different ways. On the app, there is a section that teachers can use labeled “Five Minute Brain Breaks.” Teachers can use the section to make a transition from one subject to the next. Teachers can also use this app to help students feel more relaxed in the classroom. Lastly, teachers can use this app as an interactive lesson to young students’ different ways to make formations with their body. For example, if students are learning about animals, the teacher can use the video to teach a hands-on lesson about how to symbolize those animals with their bodies.

Cost: Cosmic Kids is free to download but there are in-app purchases. For a monthly rate, the cost is \$9.99. For a yearly rate is \$64.99. You are allowed to watch up to ten videos without a cost, but after that you will have to pay.

Cosmic Kids is a simulation program for teachers to help engage students in the program. The app on the app store is a colorful app that says, “Cosmic Kids.” Upon downloading the app, you will have to select a plan rate. There is a fourteen-day free trial. Once this step is completed, you will have to create an account. Once the account is created, you will be able to access all of the videos. In the app, there are different categories for the different types of videos. There is also a search bar located at the bottom of the app. When preparing for a lesson, teachers have the option to add a video to their library to access the video easily. Although many of the videos are pretty lengthy, there are five-minute brain breaks videos. These videos will allow teachers to put on these videos while preparing for the next subject. Also, on Cosmic kids, there is a section that promotes diversity and inclusivity.

Cosmic Kids software did not crash while using it. The content was appropriate and met the user’s needs. The colors and sounds that are used on the app are meant to make the app more appealing to the students. In the videos, there are backgrounds and sounds used to keep the students engaged. The app is very easy to learn and navigate. After the first initial step of creating an account and selecting the in-app purchase plan the parent or teacher desires, kids will be able to access and navigate this app without adult supervision. While I was working at Discovery Island, I came across these videos on YouTube. During music and movement time, the students were tired of doing the same videos over and over again. Finally, I came across Cosmic Kid videos. The students were engaged and loved doing the different yoga poses. With the app, I love that there are different categories for each type of video. I also like that there are

five-minute brain break videos. Lastly, I enjoyed the fact that you can save videos into a library to access them easily. The navigation is easy, the screen design is good, and the sound effects were effective to keep students engaged. Since the videos are all accessible for free on YouTube, I would not purchase this app.

Title: ABC Mouse

Version: 8.3.0 (latest update fixed bugs and performance optimizations)

Publish/Producer: Age of Learning, Inc.

Target Audience: Students

Type(s) of Software: Discovery Learning and Problem Solving

- ABC mouse falls under the discovery learning category because students are allowed to control over what is to be learned. Upon selecting a category to learn, users are presented with different tasks or problems to complete and the answer is not apparent.

Curriculum: ABC mouse provides curriculum for students to help students gain further knowledge in the four main categories. There are over ten thousand different activities to engage the students in learning. Students can learn reading, math, science, music, art, and colors.

Cost: There is a downloaded free trial, but you cannot use the app without a purchase of \$9.99 a month.

ABC mouse is a program for elementary students to gain more knowledge over the fundamentals of reading, math, science, music, and art. There is minimal set up with the program after the in-app purchases. The content on ABC mouse content is appropriate for early learners. The graphics and colors seemed outdated and not very appealing. The visuals are not consistent throughout the program. At times, the layout looks compatible to the table while other times it looks like it is meant for a desktop. On the activities, most of them were set up to where the child

would select the answer. When color the child would tap on the area and select a color. It does not engage the child as much as expected. The student will need supervision to use this app. The parent has to set up the application and it is a very confusing and complex set up.

Compared to other apps, ABC mouse was the least liked. For the cost, it is not worth buying and does not have hands on exercises to enhance learning. The bells and whistles to the app created a distraction and made it impossible to understand what to actually click on. When the student is asked to complete a task, they are not allowed to select the wrong answer. The app automatically places things correctly. Once the student catches on to this, they will rush through the assignments to move on to something more entertaining. The app was hard to navigate. There were a lot of resources, but it mainly seems that this application is best for a computer. The Age of Learning, Inc. should consider making changes to their app to better engage students.

Title: Khan Academy Kids

Version: 3.3.1

Publisher/ Producer: Sal Khan

Target Audience: kids 0-8

Type(s) of Software: Discovery learning

Curriculum: Khan Academy kids is great for learning and could easily be used in a classroom because of all the educational things that you can find on this app.

Cost: Khan Academy kids is completely free and has no in app purchases.

Khan Academy kids is an easy to navigate easy to learn appealing app that makes learning fun for kids. It ranges in topics from Language arts, emotional literacy, science, math, and arts. It is fun and engaging for children up to age 8 it was thoughtfully designed for children. It has great art and animation; it also uses words and sounds to help communicate because most children can not read at this age.

I was very impressed by this app because it was a free app and it had so many different aspects to it. It has a wide variety of topics that a child can pick from and it is appropriate for all ages of children. I have an account set up for my 3-year-old sister and it has the option to set up other accounts for other children on the same app. Khan Academy kids has a short survey at the beginning of the setup process to learn about the child and to understand where this child is in their academic learning. Another great quality about it is that the parents/settings section of the

app is inaccessible by a child that is unable to read and follow written instructions. This app contains a lot of educational properties. The only downside I see with this app is that it has the potential of keeping a child in front of the screen for hours on end. Therefore, I believe there would need to be some supervision to ensure a balance of educational learning on technology and time spent away from technology.

Title: Math IXL

Version: 6.1.0

Publisher/ Producer: Quia Books

Target Audience: 4+

Type(s) of Software: Discover learning, tutorial, and drilling practice

Curriculum: Math IXL includes not only math but language arts. It can be used in school classrooms to increase the richness of the curriculum and give extra practice to the advanced students

Cost: \$19.99/month for unlimited access

Math IXL is an app that a student can use to learn math English and language arts from pre-K to high school. This was a very educationally based app that encouraged self-acceleration. Although this app was very educational it seemed rather plain and unappealing younger children. Ask for navigation it is on a more advanced level therefore if a younger child were using it, they would need supervision constantly. There were not really any bells or whistles on this app, and I did not really enjoy using this app. To review this app, we use a free version that gives us very limited access, and the unlimited access costs 20 dollars a month.

This app seems like it would work well for older students that are advanced. This app if used by younger students would need constant supervision and I do not believe it would hold their attention very well. This app makes learning seem competitive and not very fun. Some aspects of this app that made it more competitive include the timer that was in the top right

corner although the assignments were not timed but the amount of time you were taking was being shown to you constantly. Personally, as a student having a timer going makes me more self-conscious, nervous and stressed. Overall, I was not very impressed with this app and if I were a parent, I would not pay for it.

Title: Homer

Version: 9.0.1

Publisher/ Producer: Homer

Target Audience: 2-8

Type(s) of Software: Discovery Learning

Curriculum: This app includes such as reading, math, social emotional learning, creativity and thinking skills.

Cost: \$10 a month after a free trial

Description Homework is an educational app that makes learning fun for young children. On this app you can have more than one account set up for four different children and each account can be age appropriate for that child. The overall look of the app was appealing. It was colorful and easy to navigate for Children. This app did not require adult supervision although there is a grownups slash settings section but children that cannot read could not get into that section because it requires information only a grownup could provide. This app has a good number of bells and whistles, but they are not too distracting therefore they are taking away from the learning aspect of the app. This app did not crash but it did run a lot slower than a lot of the other apps that we were looking at. As for cost there was a one-month free trial and then a cost of \$10 per month.

I personally liked this app because of the age appropriateness of it and the ability that it can adjust to multiple different ages. I believe this app would keep the attention of the student

and make learning fun for them. This app was also great because it was easy to navigate and easy to learn even for children and it does not require much adult supervision. Comparing this app to other apps like it other apps such as Khan Academy kids this one is inferior because Khan Academy kid has just as much if not more activities and it is free while this app you have to pay for.