

# Mobile apps for the classroom

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Evernote - <http://evernote.com>

Evernote has been designed to replace the paper exercise/note book. The app enables users to create multiple notebooks with multiple pages and update these using keyboard input from their device. In addition to the usual text features Evernote also enables the integration of images and voice notes, which can be added to the pages of the note book using input from the camera or microphone on the user's device or uploaded from a library or other apps. The notes and notebooks that users create in Evernote can be shared virtually so that other users can contribute to or comment on them.

## EVERNOTE EVALUATION

- Financial  
Evernote is built on a sound 'freemium' business model which allows users to access the service for free, but charges businesses for additional storage and enhanced services beyond those of the basic free account.
- Technical  
Evernote is cross platform compatible and has versions for the major mobile platforms as well as running in the browser. It also synchronises across platforms, so when users save content on one device they can open it again on any other device. It requires registration and is strong on security and safety. Users only share documents with their own contacts and through their own networks and sharing rights can easily be withdrawn.
- Motivational  
Evernote is an authentic app in that it was not specifically designed for language learning and has a wide range of use beyond that purpose. The app was designed for collaboration within business environments, so it has valuable cache as a tool for developing digital literacies which can be useful beyond the classroom.
- Pedagogical  
Evernote has strong pedagogical applications within the classroom and can be used for note taking, as well as a range of writing activities to develop writing skills. As note taking can be made collaborative it also has the potential to be exploited to develop digital collaboration and cooperation skills and can be used to support small scale team working projects. It is a strong tool in terms of developing digital literacies and it helps users to take a step away from paper dependency and towards a more digital and collaborative working practice.

ClassDojo - <http://www.classdojo.com/>

ClassDojo is a behavioural management app which enables teachers to track and reward student behaviour. Teachers can mark students' attendance in class as well as creating a number of rewards for different forms of positive and negative behaviours. These awards come in the form of badges which have plus or minus points attributed to them and to which teachers can add comments. Both students and parents can also register on the site and track their ongoing progress and see the reports, rewards and comments that the teacher adds. The platform is made more motivating for students through the use of avatars in the form of monsters which each student can customise to make more individual or unique.

## CLASSDOJO EVALUATION

- Financial  
ClassDojo is at time of writing free and it is stated that it will remain so for those people who sign up as early adopters during this post beta phase. The future business model isn't stated as yet, but

there is an implication that once the platform becomes firmly established schools may well have to pay. Whether this will be on a per student basis or an overall licensing fee is not clear.

- Technical

The platform requires registration, but as a built for education resource it seems to be very safe even for younger students as participation is mainly via the teacher. ClassDojo is cross platform compatible and will run on mobile devices as well as in the browser. The app is very user friendly for students and gives parents access to student reports, but is more complex for teachers to get used to and may take some training for less tech savvy teachers. The app does need to be used over a period of time to get best results.

- Motivational

The app is neither authentic, as it is purpose built for education, nor does it facilitate the development of digital literacies among students, it does however require and encourage some development of the teacher's digital literacy levels. There are elements of personalisation both in the teachers' facility to customise the forms of behaviour they award students for and more importantly in the students' facility to customise their own monster avatars.

- Pedagogical

From a pedagogical standpoint this app may well be instrumental in improving classroom behaviour, but this will depend to some extent on the teachers' use of the tool and how students and parents respond to it. If used properly though it could well be a very useful assessment tool for all involved in the educational process and encourage much more support and participation from parents in managing problem students.

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## Quip - <https://quip.com/>

Quip is a word processing app which supports synchronous and asynchronous collaborative peer editing and collects, records and tracks the versions of documents as they evolve. It also includes an instant messaging feature so that users can discuss edits and alterations to the documents they are working on.

### QUIP EVALUATION

- Financial

Quip is built on a 'freemium' business model, so it is free for individual users, but has added features for businesses that need to use a scaled up version with greater storage and which can support larger groups working together.

- Technical

Quip is designed to run on mobile and provides an app for iOS, but will also run within the browser on desktop computers and other tablets and smart phones. It is reasonably user friendly and is built around a very similar interface design to Evernote and collects together documents into folders or notebooks in the same way. The tracking process is reasonably intuitive, but understanding how users share and interact will take both teachers and students a little time. Users do need to register and the app does seem very safe. This app could be used both as a teaching tool and by teachers as a collaborative teacher development tool to share and develop lesson plans and materials together. It could sustain a number of different activity types and so is definitely and will benefit from sustained use.

- Motivational

The app definitely supports the development of genuine workplace digital literacies and is clearly an authentic app which has been designed to support business practices.

- Pedagogical

The learning outcomes of using the tool will be dependent upon the types of activities the teacher designs around it, but it has very obvious benefits for process type writing activities and peer editing. The fact that it supports collaboration and communication around these activities also adds a layer another layer of development that well designed activities can help to develop. The clear tracking of the different versions of each document and who has made the changes should make it

much easier for the teacher to assess who within the group has done what elements of the work and identify where some students may be struggling. To gain full benefit from the app teachers will need to use it over a sustained period, but that shouldn't be a problem as it does support many of the kinds of paper based practices and activities that are common to the classroom at present.

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## Touchcast - <http://www.touchcast.com/>

Touchcast is an app for creating video content which links to various web based and embedded resources and media. It enables the user to create a video commentary which guides the viewer through various websites and study resources and gives a commentary of what these resources contain. At the same time the user can add supporting images to their video to support understanding of what they are saying.

### **TOUCHCAST EVALUATION**

- Financial  
At present Touchcast can be used on a free account to produce up to 1 hour of content, beyond that it will be necessary to purchase a 'Pro' or 'Enterprise' account. The prices of these accounts haven't yet been decided as Touchcast is still in beta and it is stated that the terms and agreements of pricing can be changed with 30 days notice.
- Technical  
Touchcast is only available to run on iPad at present and doesn't run in the browser, although the content it produces will run on any computer. It does require registration and is secure and safe for students as there is no social aspect built in to the app. The app is quite complex and has quite a few features so there will be quite a steep initial learning curve to climb before producing polished results. This may well be an app which is initially more appropriate for use by teachers to produce content for online or blended learning class, though if students can put in the time to learn how to use it, it could be very beneficial for them.
- Motivational  
The app is an authentic one and it has been designed for the creation of multimedia journalistic type projects so learning to use it would help students develop some very useful digital literacies and enable them to produce highly personalised projects with a very professional level of design. The skills students could develop from using such a tool would also be easily transferable to many aspects of the business workplace.
- Pedagogical  
As a tool for teachers to produce engaging content, this app has exceptional potential as it can take online interaction with video and web based tasks to a new level and content of this kind could be very beneficial for developing students language skills and digital literacies. As a tool for enabling students to produce their own projects it would require prolonged use to justify the effort students would need to overcome the learning curve, but they would be able to work collaboratively and the strong motivational drive behind using such a tool may well help learners to become more autonomous as they will have the opportunity to reflect on, evaluate and try to improve their own linguistic output.

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## Educreations - <http://www.educreations.com/>

Educreations is a 'whiteboard' app which enables users to write by hand or with text and add images to multiple flip-board pages. It has a range of backgrounds which users can add to with their own templates for different types of lessons. It also enables the user to record the lesson and save it as a video clip with voice narration. These saved lesson clips can then be shared online.

### **EDUCREATIONS EVALUATION**

- Financial  
The Educreations app is free at present, but the company states its right to start to charge for some services in the future.
- Technical  
The app is very simple and intuitive to use. It does require registration but as an educational app it is secure. The app has been designed for teachers to use as an interactive whiteboard and as a means of producing short video lessons, but it could also be used by students to produce their own review notes and learning support materials.
- Motivational  
This is a made for education app so it has little authentic cache, though there is an element of digital skill development and allowing hands on use of the app may well help students to develop some valuable digital presentation skills which could be transferred over into the workplace. Again, giving students hands on access to the app to develop their own revision lessons may also add an element of personalisation.
- Pedagogical  
Educreations offers clear learning outcomes to enhance teacher led presentation and create video recordings of these presentations for review. The app has many immediate pedagogical gains for the teacher and learners, though prolonged use will help teachers to build greater benefit from the app. The Educreations website also hosts the collective output of all the app users, so this does add a collaborative element at least at the teacher level as teachers are able to share their lesson recordings and can find useful inspiration and useable content from other teachers.

## Reflector - <http://www.airsquirrels.com/reflector/>

Reflector is a desktop app which can be downloaded and installed to enable a computer to pick up a wireless signal for an iOS mobile device. This enables the user of the device to project the screen and sound from the tablet to the computer and so project through a data projector. Having enabled this process the user can project their tablet screen wirelessly and enable multiple tablet users to also share their screen through the data projector.

### REFLECTOR EVALUATION

- Financial  
Reflector isn't a free app, but at \$12.99 it is low cost, especially when used in combination with a free whiteboard app such as educreations as it can replace most of the functions of a much more expensive interactive whiteboard.
- Technical  
The app can be downloaded onto any desktop computer, but the 'Airplay' function it builds on is unique to Apple devices so users who want to exploit this app must have an Apple mobile device such as a more recent iPad. Set up of the app is very simple, though some school networks with high level security settings may find that their server blocks the connection between the desktop based app and the device.
- Motivational  
This app serves a purely technical function so motivational aspects are irrelevant
- Pedagogical  
Again as a purely technical app most of the evaluation criteria linked to pedagogy are not applicable.

## Mailvu - <http://mailvu.com/>

Mailvu is an asynchronous video communication tool. It enables users to record themselves speaking using the camera and microphone on their device, watch and quality check the message, and then send a link to this message via email to a recipient.

## MAILVU EVALUATION

- Financial
  - Though MailVu does have paid accounts for registered users, it is also possible to use the app for free without registering or logging in. There are also 'Pro' accounts available which offer a substantially enhanced service which may be of use to schools where they feel there is high demand for the use of this app as a teaching tool.
- Technical
  - MailVu has free downloadable apps for most of the popular mobile platforms and also runs within a desktop browser as long as the 'Flash' browser plugin is installed. The app is very simple to use quick to learn and user friendly. It can be used effectively by both teachers and students, particularly outside of the classroom.
- Motivational
  - MailVu was built for authentic communication purposes, so it has strong potential to build students' digital literacies and workplace skills as synchronous and asynchronous video communications are likely to become more common in the globally connected workplace.
- Pedagogical
  - As the app supports communicative speaking activities, the use of it has clear learning outcomes for students. The asynchronous nature of the app will also help teachers to assess their students' abilities and give the students the opportunity to see their own performance and build their self awareness, so building on their learner autonomy. With prolonged use through multiple activity types both teachers and students should be able to look back at previous recordings and gauge the degree of progress that has been made.

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## Zeega - <http://zeega.com>

Zeega is a tool for remixing digital media from multiple sources to create digital narrative. Users can add their own media as well as using found media from around the internet and media supplied by Zeega. They drag media onto digital pages and can edit them and add their own text commentary and sound track. Zeega outputs interactive video which user can page through like digital books.

## ZEEGA EVALUATION

- Financial
  - Zeega is free and there seems to be a total absence of business model. At present there is neither advertising nor premium services so it is hard to see how the platform will be sustained into the future unless this changes.
- Technical
  - Zeega is cross platform compatible in that it will run within the web browser on any device. The interface is reasonably user friendly and relies on standard drag and drop actions to create content. It does require registration but the terms of use seem to offer reasonable levels of data security. There is little social interaction through the service so students should be safe from any kind of harassment. This tool could be suitable for teacher use, e.g. creating engaging content for learners, or for student use inside or outside of class to create multimedia projects and digital narrative.
- Motivational
  - The app is authentic in that most users are producing objects that are not specifically for educational purposes. There is also a strong media aspect to the site and it is being used by some digital journalists to produce short multimedia documentaries. Using the app will support the development of the students' digital literacies and allow them to find and create very personalised content around themes that they are interested in.
- Pedagogical
  - It's possible to create a Zeega with very little language input or output, so teachers will have to build linguistic interaction into the projects to create these to ensure there is a satisfactory linguistic

learning outcome. It might be difficult to sustain a number of different activities using this app, though doing similar projects on a range of different topics could well be sustainable. The media that Zeega produces is assessable, but it will be hard for the teacher to assess the quality of the linguistic collaboration and interaction which took place to create it, unless this is done using another app or in the classroom where the teacher can monitor. Using the app autonomously and asking students to use it at home for homework assignments may be successful, but the teacher would have to ensure that the end product included enough linguistic input to make this worth while as a language development exercise.

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## Kidblog - <http://kidblog.org>

Kidblog is platform for creating blogs. The platform allows a teachers to create a blog for themselves and each of their students. The teacher then has the power to control who has access to read and comment on the blogs and has the power to pre-moderate and edit posts as well as the comments that appear on them, before they appear to the other class members.

### **KIDBLOG EVALUATION**

- Financial  
Kidblog is free and there are some premium features available for large scale accounts, though it is a made for education app.
- Technicalities  
Kid blog is cross platform compatible in that it will work in the browser across desktop and mobile devices, but there is also an app for iOS mobile devices. For students the app is reasonably user friendly, but it is more complex for teacher to master as they have additional editorial controls to understand. The app does require registration, but is extremely safe as once registered the teacher can monitor all student activity and interactivity. The app is suitable for use by both teachers, for creating content for students, and students for creating and publishing their own content. It should be useful for the publishing of multiple tasks and activity outcomes from projects etc.
- Motivational  
Although this isn't an 'authentic' workplace type blogging platform, it operates in pretty much the same way so students will be building genuine digital skills which they can apply outside of the classroom.
- Pedagogical  
Kidblog has a wide rang of potential pedagogical applications, from creating online publishing tasks, to creating digital worksheets and tasks for students. The tool can enable the creation of communicative and interactive learning activities through the use of the comments feature and embedding of other digital media into the posting space, but teachers will have to design tasks to encourage and exploit this type of interaction. These is the type of tool that can sustain long term use for a range of projects and tasks, but is less practical for a one off task as it requires time to master.

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## Storify - <http://storify.com/>

Storify is a multimedia text creator combined with social media search engine. It enables users to search various sources including Google, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter and drag and drop media from these sources into a digital text. Users can also add links to their own media and annotate the text to weave the different media artefacts into a form of digital narrative.

### **STORIFY EVALUATION**

- Financial  
Storify is free for unlimited use, but does also have a range of premium business plans the income from which is used to support the development of the app.
- Technical  
Storify is cross platform compatible as it runs in the web browser, but there is also a app for iOS devices. The interface works slightly differently on the iOS app version. The app has proven to be user friendly to create basic content but can be more complex to understand some of the publishing and drafting stages. It does require registration and takes security seriously. It does have social networking aspects, but also has a procedure for reporting abuse. The app could be used by teachers to produce multimedia multi-text content for students or students could use the app to produce their own content, do research or do project work.
- Motivational  
The app is authentic and was designed as a tool to create digital narrative based around current affairs and online content. As such it helps students to develop a genuine digital literacy and can also be used to develop sound digital study skills. It can also give students the opportunity to personalise digital content and add their own voice and commentary to current affairs.
- Pedagogical  
Using Storify does not in itself lead to the achievement of a pedagogical linguistic goal and so teachers will need to design projects and define criteria for the use of the app to ensure that its use is valid within the language classroom. The app does support students autonomous working and they could work with the app outside the classroom and use it effectively to improve their digital study skills. On the free account, Storify doesn't function for group or collaborative work, though there is still some communication and collaboration through the comments feature and users can 'follow' each other's feeds. The app could be used for multiple projects, so it can sustain long term use.

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Side by Side - [http://leibao.webs.com/Apps\\_by\\_Bao\\_Lei/Side\\_by\\_Side.html](http://leibao.webs.com/Apps_by_Bao_Lei/Side_by_Side.html)

Side by Side is an app which allows users to open and interact with two or more different documents within the same browser screen. The app also has its own note taking facility, so it enables the user to browse articles on the internet on one part of the screen while taking notes on another.

### **SIDE BY SIDE EVALUATION**

- Financial  
Side by Side is a free app but it generates income through having in-app advertising. This can be switched off after opening though. The app was created by a Ph.D student in China, so it is unclear how long it will be supported or whether there will be any further developments with the app that it might need to keep up to date.
- Technical  
At present this app only works on iOS device and is only really useable on the iPad (the screens on iPhone or iTouch would be too small to work on effectively). It is very simple and intuitive to use though on the iPad. It doesn't require any registration as it acts like an alternative web browser, but it's unclear how safe the browser is and whether any user information is being stored in it. The app could be useful to both teachers and students.
- Motivational  
The app has been developed to aid online study skills, so in the field of language learning it could be described as an authentic app. It does support the development of digital literacy and digital study skills.
- Pedagogical  
The teacher will need to design activities around the use of the app as it does not in itself support or develop a linguistic competence. It should however be very usefully combined with online reading and research tasks. There is no direct element of communication or collaboration built into

the app, students could be organised into working groups and encouraged to share the notes they create using the app. Students work within the app should be reasonably easy for teachers to assess as students could share the notes they take in response to their study and research tasks.

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## Audioboo - <http://audioboo.fm/>

Audioboo enables users to create audio content which can be serialised in an online feed for viewers to listen to and comment on. Comments on the entries can also be recorded as audio.

### AUDIOBOO EVALUATION

- Financial  
Audioboo is built on a 'freemium' business model so there is a free subscription that allows user to record short audio clips and if you want the capability to record longer clips then you need a paid subscription.
- Technical  
The app is very simple and easy to use once the basic concepts have been understood. It does require subscription and it does enable user to user interactions, but there is a facility for reporting offensive audio postings, though as far as I can see none to report offensive replies on the comments. The app is cross platform compatible and works in the web browser on the computer as well as having native app versions for iOS, Android and Blackberry. It is suitable for use by both teachers and students.
- Motivational  
This is an authentic app which is being used my the mainstream news and entertainment media, so it does support the development of workplace digital literacies as well as offering the capability to develop both listening and speaking skills. Students can also use it to express their own personal ideas and opinions.
- Pedagogical  
Being an asynchronous communication tool makes establishing learner outcomes quite simple for Audioboo, as it is ideally suited towards developing listening and speaking skills through interaction. Having this capability outside of the classroom also helps to develop students' learner autonomy as they will have the opportunity revise and review listening activities as well as use the tool with the range of authentic listening materials that exist within the Audioboo community. Using the tool to record students speaking should also support assessment of that skill and make it easier for teachers to rack student progress over time.

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## Fotobabble - <http://www.fotobabble.com/>

Fotobabble allows users to add short audio clips to static images. The user can snap pictures or upload them from their library and the record a short audio clip to go with the image. The audio and image files are then combined and can be shared through social media, hosted on the Fotobabble website or sent by text or email.

### FOTOBABBLE EVALUATION

- Financial  
Fotobabble is free, but there is an enterprise version available to businesses which allows longer recordings (over 60 seconds) and additional features..
- Technical  
Fotobabble runs on iOS and on both Mac and PC browsers, but as it utilises the Flash technology for playing within the browser it may not be compatible with mobile devices which don't support Flash. Both the iOS app and the web based version of the app are quite simple and intuitive to use. The service does require registration and the audio images produced with Fotobabble can be



commented on and reposted through Facebook and other social network sites. Fotobabbles are also searchable and it is possible to find content that would be unsuitable for education and particularly for young learners, but there is a system for reporting abuse and flagging up inappropriate content.

- Motivational

This app does have limited potential to develop digital literacy, but these aren't particularly high level digital literacy skills and probably not ones which many students don't already possess. The app is authentic though its application to work place related practices is rather limited. The app does though allow students a good degree of personalisation as it can be used based around their own lives, content, friends and interests.

- Pedagogical

The ability to combine images and audio makes Fotobabble an ideal tool for building linguistically focused learning activities and the benefits of using images to stimulate linguistic output are well documented in language teaching literature. In the hands of students Fotobabble is also a communication tool that allows interaction between the teacher or student who creates the content and the viewer of that content. Fotobabble could easily support a wide range of learning activities over a period of time and although the content isn't produced collaboratively the tool can support a degree of learner autonomy through use outside the classroom and in the students' personal life. The output from the app can easily be assessed by the teacher and as with Audioboo, if the app is used over a period of time it should be possible for the teacher to identify the degree of progress students are making.



<http://technogogy.org.uk/top-apps.pdf>