**4-2 Discussion: App Design Elements**

The two apps I would like to compare are the Elevate brain training app and the Brilliant app. Each of which are designed to enable the user to increase their knowledge and skill in a variety of different educational topics. While the Elevate app features games the user can interact with to focus on improving varying skills like reading, mathematics, writing, speaking, and memory. The Brilliant app takes a more educational approach by offering its version of interactive courses through varying topics like Science, Math, Data, Computer Science, and many more. Each has their own individual benefit to the user.

**Theme:**

**Elevate** – The Elevate app features a stylish and dynamic design that matches the blue icon on the phone’s home screen. Most of the colors that are included match the central theme with bright and blue icons for the individual games. The icons at the bottom of the screen for the different pages are highlighted blue when selected to match with the central blue theme.

Improvements – Perhaps add the ability to change the color of the theme.

Brilliant – The Brilliant app is somewhat like the Elevate app in that it has a primary white background, however it doesn’t revolve around a central theme. The courses and subjects each have their own individual primary colors to distinguish them among the litany of material offered. The Brilliant Icon itself features an ambiguous green icon which is not replicated across the rest of the app. As you move from screen to screen, the icons do not highlight to make it easier for the user to distinguish.

Improvements – Consider designing the app around a central theme.

Winner – I think the Elevate app is the better contender for this aspect, as most of the design elements follow a central theme.

**Color:**

Elevate – The Elevate app features much brighter colors that appear more dynamic, however there is a less range of colors embedded in the app’s icons. This can make the games slightly more difficult to distinguish based on color alone, which may be even more so for individuals that have trouble distinguishing between colors of lower contrast. The app follows the central blue theme across most of the screens, and only introduces a greater range of colors when selecting games to play on the Games screen. The colors appear to be more monochromatic as well with less contrast.

Improvements – Add better contrast between the colors among games.

Brilliant – When interacting across the app’s screens and courses, each course or subject provides its own central theme. This helps to distinguish between the varying courses and their many lessons. Each lesson of a similar course will have the same coloring despite being a different topic. This doesn’t offer much visually but it does make it easier for the user to understand they are viewing lessons on the same course topic. The colors themselves are not very dynamic and rather close to primary colors but this can be easier for users to maneuver across the app visually.

Improvements – Improve the range of colors that are offered across the app.

Winner – I feel Brilliant is better in terms of color contrast, simply because app course and topic is a unique color to stand out visually.

**Typography:**

Elevate – The app doesn’t have a varying style of fonts available for the different games. Each game is composed using the same font style and size. This can make the icons less visually appealing, however each game icon has a unique custom design element that helps to distinguish it amongst the other games. This can compensate for the simplistic typography across the rest of the app.

Improvements – Add more unique font elements to the games.

Brilliant – This app utilizes varying font styles and sizes to distinguish between the course topic, lesson topic, and individual lessons. While providing more detail for the user due to the amount of material that is available in the app, it can be overwhelming to focus on one specific detail of the screen. Each icon features a bold styling and is only distinguishable by a customized icon of a certain color and includes varying font sizes across each topic.

Improvements – Sometimes the varying font sizes can be information overload. Offer less text on the main home screen.

Winner – Elevate, due to its simplistic typography and standardized font size.

**Layout:**

Elevate – The layout for Elevate is rather intuitive and features the different brain training workouts in large icons across the screen, making it easy for the user to home in on what they would like to practice. Across the other screens, the layout keeps a simplistic format and provides only what user needs to know to interact with the app. The Games screen displays the games in a grid format with large custom icons for each game, making it easy for the user to scroll down the list looking for a specific game.

Improvements – Add more flexibility for the user to change between topics or create a customized list of topics to practice.

Brilliant – Brilliants layout is slightly similar in that it provides a grid view of each of the different courses, except the text is smaller is located below the icon. However, the user can engage with more comprehensive material by comparison. The user can also interact with the Courses either by scrolling down through the grid list or simply selecting one of the topic buttons at the top to instantly be brought to a specific section. This can make it easy for users to find the topics they are most interested in.

Improvements – Adding a button that enables the user to go from page to page between topics instead of scrolling down across a long list of topics and sub-topics. Add the ability to favorite certain topics and add a focus view.

Winner – Brilliant has the better layout I believe; the layout is comprehensive and implements features for the user to navigate across screens and topics.