Project Milestone #3: Competitive Analysis

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In today's digital age, learning is no longer confined to traditional classrooms. It has expanded into the world of applications, offering a new way of learning with the click of a button. Among these, Duolingo stands out as a vibrant language-learning app, Notion serves as an organized workspace, and Flora as a way to enhance study sessions.

Duolingo– App #1

The first app we studied is Duolingo– an application that helps you learn new languages using fun games and other incentives, such as in-game experience and currency.

Duolingo is extremely user-friendly and easy to use because of its clean design and simple navigation. The app is fun and addictive because of its rewarding sounds, animations of their characters, and competitiveness between you and other users. This is something we took inspiration from for our own application since it's something that keeps some of us going back for more.

The aesthetics of Duolingo feel appropriate because of the way they lay out lessons in a trail format, as well as changing the color of each section. It makes it rewarding to look back and see how far you've come, or even seeing your progress as you move forward with the new colors that remind you that you are moving ahead. The font and iconography are easy on the eyes. It uses symbols to signify different pages, but the order and variety of them changes depending on which language you are currently learning. This makes things a little confusing for the user, but I believe the designers chose to do it that way because they do not have the same information available for each language (i.e. they have a "practice alphabet" page for Arabic, but that page is unnecessary for French as an English speaker).

While the aesthetics are great, we plan to go in a different direction. This is not only because we are a studying app rather than a learning app, but we also want to mindfully implement color theory (blue being addictive and relaxing, red being intense, etc.).

As a takeaway, what we do want to take inspiration from and implement ourselves is: user experience and all that comes with it (leaderboards, achievements, quests), and the simplicity of the button navigation. Altercations we want to make are: adding the ability to message each other, ability to disable the leaderboard for those who do not like the competitiveness, and changing the way that user experience is generated (the user gains experience by completing lessons in Duolingo, but we are a studying app), likely by creating flashcards, sharing the app to friends, or studying for a certain amount of time with our study timer.

Notion– App #2

       The second app we discussed is Notion. "Notion is the connected workspace where better, faster work happens" Notion provides built-in tooltips to guide users on how to use their application when they first create an account; they also ask prompting questions like what is your primary use in order to tailor the many capabilities to the users specific needs. By creating prompting questions for new users, Notion as an app can expose users to features that best suit their needs. For example, using Notion as a high school teacher trying to manage your lesson plans and calendar vs. an owner of a start-up managing their team and investors can both use Notion to make tasks easier for them but would require very different templates and features Notion has to offer overall.

       Once your account is created, you are all set to start using Notion for organizing and creating pages for what you need. With a sidebar, navigation users can see all the pages they have created as well as any nested pages they have linked inside those pages. This view allows users to visually see everything they have in Notion and navigate to it seamlessly from anywhere inside the mobile app. Notion also has templates created by Notion and other users that can be filled out, used, duplicated, and shared so various pages can be used for the same use. Notion is fun to use as it has a drag-and-drop feel to the interface, and users can type in commands using the backslash to change how the screens are organized.

       Notion uses a minimalist design aesthetic of mainly white with a little color for the text and the things you can add inside pages like code, text, headings, images, embedded webpages and Notion pages, dropdowns, databases, and more. This minimalist design allows users to highlight important things, format pages to their needs, and overall stay focused while using Notion, as it is not cluttered or distracting.

       Our app differs in aesthetics as it will have a more zen theme that promotes a calm feeling through the use of earth tones in our color scheme. Notion does a great job at guiding users in its initial onboarding, and implementing features or designing the user experience to cater to users' specific needs can be a great addition to our app. A way this can possibly be achieved is by adding tooltips on each screen of our app detailing the ways in which the user can use the features we will have to ensure they take full advantage of its purpose.

Flora - Green Focus– App #3

       The final app we analyzed is Flora - Green Focus. Flora is easily usable– it has 5 buttons to navigate the tabs and features that are easily recognizable for what features they hold. There is a chat button, a friends list button, the flora timer button, the stats button, and finally a settings button. The main feature of this app is a study timer. The task for starting the timer is very simple and straightforward. It is a "start" button on the main page that opens up as soon as you open the app. It has 2 separate timer selections, one is a focus section and one is a break section.

       The Flora app is easy to use, since everything is labeled, and all the buttons are very straightforward. As stated above, the buttons are labeled exactly as what their action is. The design is very user friendly, especially the color theme, which is different shades of green. Since it is an app that grows a mini virtual tree the more time you spend studying, the color green is

very fitting. I think the designers decided to use green and the element of growing a tree for a study timer app because it is a calming color and nature tends to be the best environment to focus in. The app is fun to use because of the aesthetics used in the app. The animation of the little tree growing inspires the user to study for longer just to watch the tree grow. The more trees the user grows, the bigger their forest. This is a huge motivator for those who like to have a reward system for their study plans.

The way our aesthetics are different from the Flora app, is that we use a more urban approach rather than full on nature. There are some inspired elements from Flora however it is mostly our own. The color scheme is the main inspiration since we are also using different shades of green in our application. The layout of Flora only serves to inspire us further as we also create a study timer feature of our own.

Conclusion:

In summary, Ace will differ from these apps because we will focus on several different features that help students learn and study, compared to one specific theme that the others tend to go for. Our app will include a planner, flashcards, a study timer, and a statistics section for users to view their study habits and statistics. Some of these, as already stated, are inspirations, like Duolingo's leaderboard and Flora's study timer. We believe that by bringing all of these seemingly non-related features into one organized space will separate our app from others on the market.