

Website Critique: Microsoft Reflect

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Identifying Information

- ★ Name of Website: Microsoft Reflect
- ★ Company: Microsoft
- ★ Cost: Free
- ★ Age Groups: Pre-K to Higher-education, Educators, and Staff
- ★ Link: <https://reflect.microsoft.com/>

Critique

This website purports that it is a wellbeing app that supports connection, expression, and learning. By all accounts, this is an accurate representation of the website's abilities. Connections are offered in the classroom between students and students, as well as students and teachers; school counselors and school psychologists to the general school population; between coworkers and administrators; and many other combinations. Expression is shown through many avenues, such as the main categories on the homepage of Microsoft Reflect, including meditate, move, play, music, podcasts, and favorites. "Meditate" offers various activities revolving the breath, thoughts, and positivity for all ages. "Move" includes daily moves such as "movement to build confidence" and "moving through big feelings." Additionally, there is a section for "Your balance buddy," which is an approachable monster that offers dancing, stretching, and this-or-that activities. On the "play" page, a coloring book, a "guess the emotion" game, and a memory game are offered to further dive into emotions in unique ways. The music page offers 7 different landscapes, including a piano dreamscape and safari symphonies, that allow the listener to be engulfed in the sounds of these environments for 2 to 9 minutes at a time. Lastly, podcasts

are available for the user to hear how people are able to use skills such as handling anger, changing frustration into progress, and managing anxiety. Learning is intertwined in the entire experience, in subtle ways that likely seem more in line with a game or video than anything else, especially with younger children.

This is an easy to use app, as it is well laid out and easy to navigate. Each major section has its own tab with an identifying symbol, which is useful for children who may not be strong readers. The app is aesthetically pleasing, and welcoming for people of all ages. If a child can use an iPad, phone, or computer, they can use this website. Each module within the various pages of the website have visual indicators of what the topic of it is about- for example, the coloring book has an illustration of a paintbrush with a palette of paint. This is helpful for younger kids who rely on pictures more so than words to navigate. This website can be incorporated into Microsoft Teams, an app that many companies and schools use to communicate with their employees and upload things such as assignments or host a meeting. By adding Reflect into Teams, teachers, employers, and administrators can all understand how individuals are feeling.

Strengths of this app include its integrated inclusion by design. Microsoft Reflect is designed with inclusion in mind, supporting students of all abilities by offering powerful accessibility options that are built-in, mainstream, and non-stigmatizing. There are inclusive features like narration, the Feelings Monster, and mindfulness activities that open Reflect to more students with a wider range of abilities. In turn, helping them navigate and regulate their emotions. In addition to inclusion, a strength of Reflect is that it is available in over 50 languages. This is a great tool to use in schools that have learners that speak all sorts of languages. Next, Reflect is thoughtfully designed to support a diverse range of learners,

including Pre-K to Higher-education, educators, and staff. This website was created by collaborating with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) experts, which helps to ensure that the app creates a positive impact and provides support to every user. The app is also user friendly with videos to show how to use and implement it in the classroom, workplace, and so on. An available option for Reflect is to record a check-in responder's name. One might choose to hide the names to project it as an empathy-building tool. Lastly, different emotional vocabularies are available to choose the best fit for an audience. The broad emotion vocabulary includes over 60 diverse emotion words that can help students expand their vocabulary. The simplified emotion vocabulary is focused on fewer, more basic emotions to reduce overwhelm.

Weaknesses of this app include the need to have a subscription to Microsoft to use it. It is convenient for many people, as many companies and schools have a license to operate Microsoft and share with employees or students. This could be a disadvantage in an area with less of a budget to spare. There are also limited free trials, so if a school district or company is trying to decide if it is worth the money, they can test it out to determine its worth. This also falls in line with the idea that another disadvantage is needing electronic equipment to use this tool. That being said, if someone has a computer, all they need is wifi to access this website and use all the tools that it has to offer. No other materials are needed besides a device that connects to wifi.

Reflection

I would certainly recommend this website. I believe that it is remarkable how a website is able to create a space that can be shared between students in Pre-K all the way to adults in corporate jobs. This website is fun, interactive, approachable, and pleasant to spend time on. It is convenient that it can be linked through Microsoft Teams and connect students, teachers,

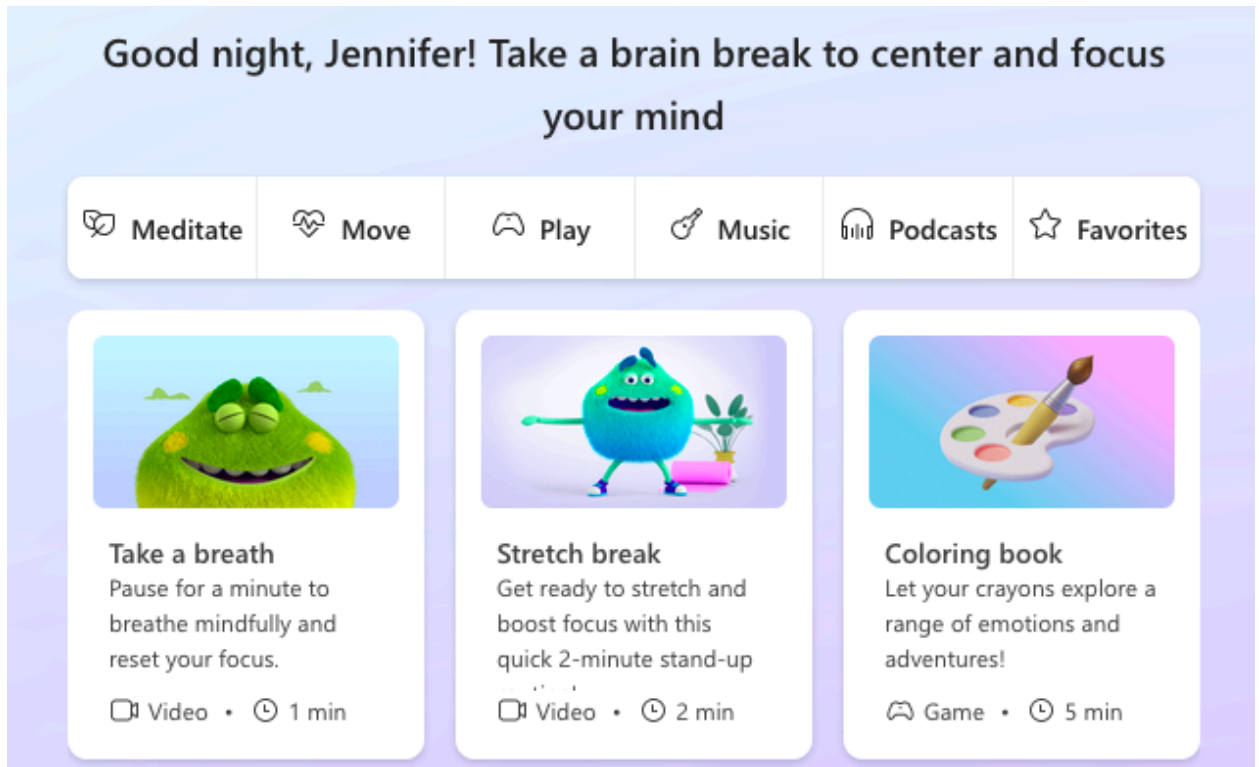
coworkers, and anyone with Teams already. It is a useful tool for check-ins, movement breaks, relaxation/meditation breaks, learning social and emotional skills, and prioritizing mental health in a fun and interactive manner. I also believe this would be a useful universal screening tool for mental health statuses throughout the school year, as a school psychologist for students and school professionals alike. It is a way for people to talk about how they feel in a non-intrusive manner, because they can share as much information or as little information as they would like. Additionally, it can be less daunting to check in online than face to face sometimes, especially for sensitive topics. Further, if a student repeatedly reports “stressed” or “anxious” as feelings as of late, it may be a good idea to keep an idea on them to ensure they are in a healthy range of emotions. Similar to tri-annual universal screeners for academics, this could be used as a tool for social-emotional learning and regulation.

Snapshots of the Website

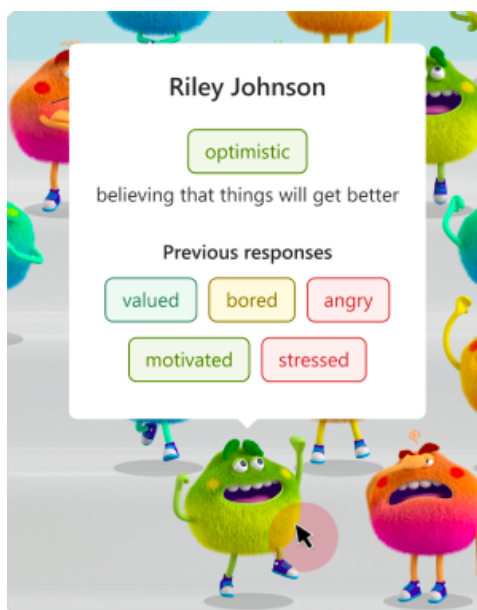
1. A class with the students’ respective emotions shown for that particular day:



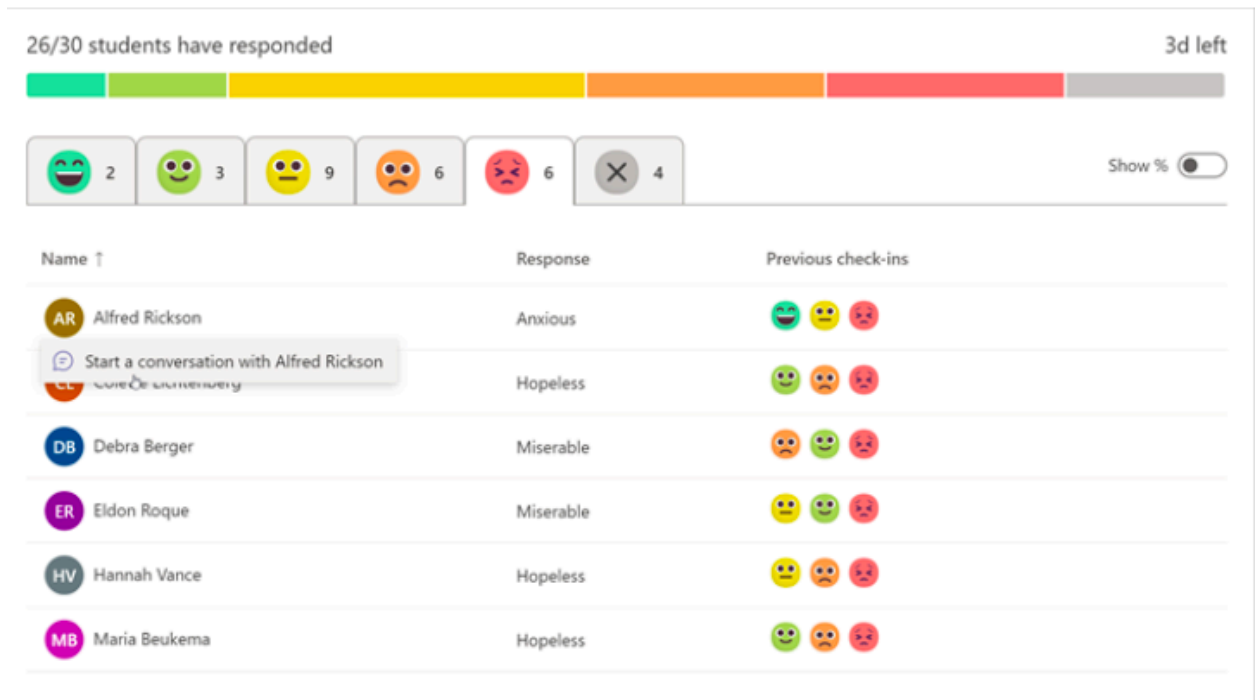
2. The home screen of Reflect, including all categories of tabs available:



3. An individual's current emotions, as well as previous emotions to compare to for record's sake:



4. Student responses to their check-ins, with various levels of emotion to choose from:



5. The Microsoft Teams association with Reflect to integrate check-ins with a more regular schedule:

