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media release

TVOKIDS LAUNCHES TWO FREE EDUCATIONAL GAMES SHOWN BY OISE RESEARCH TO IMPROVE WORKING MEMORY

Working memory is a brain function essential to learning across multiple subject areas including math

TORONTO, June 20, 2012 – Today [TVO](#) launched two free educational apps for kids, designed in partnership with the University of Toronto’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) to increase a child’s capacity to learn. OISE has conducted formal research into the effectiveness of the apps and found that *[Hop, Frog, Hop!](#)* and *[Ribbit, Frog, Ribbit!](#)* can help improve a child’s working memory – a brain function essential to learning across all subject areas and in particular math.

The effectiveness of the apps was evaluated in a controlled randomized experiment by lead researcher Zachary Hawes, under principal investigator Dr. Janette Pelletier, Director of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study at OISE. The six-week study, involving 66 Grade 1 students, found that the students who played *Hop, Frog, Hop!* and *Ribbit, Frog, Ribbit!* showed statistically significant improvements on two tasks that measured their working memory and self-regulation, in comparison to the control group of students who played only math games. The students who played the working memory games showed greater improvements across all seven tasks used in the study including measures of math aptitude.

Working memory, broadly defined as the ability to actively hold and manipulate information in the mind for a brief period of time, is essential to a child’s ability to complete learning tasks such as following instructions in the classroom, performing mental arithmetic and understanding the meaning of printed text. Low working memory is also closely linked with behaviour problems in the classroom and behavioural disorders like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.¹

“Given the importance of working memory and self-regulation in the classroom, evidence-based games like TVOKids’ *Hop, Frog, Hop!* and *Ribbit, Frog, Ribbit!* appear to be one effective method for improving children’s capacity to learn,” said Zachary Hawes.

“Content-specific educational computer games, such as math games, might only lead to improvements in tasks practised during game play. What makes this study exciting is that

¹ See Martinussen, Hayden, Hogg-Johnson & Tannock, 2005; Wilcutt, Doyle, Nigg, Faraone & Pennington, 2005

the working memory training games have been shown to lead to improvements across multiple subject areas.”

The two frog-themed apps are available for free download on tablet devices at tvokids.com/apps/hopfroghop and tvokids.com/apps/ribbitfrogribbit. The games are also online at tvokids.com.

Featuring colourful frog characters, the games challenge players to match hopping patterns or follow music note sequences that increase in complexity as the player improves. These fun and challenging memory games were created for children aged six to nine, but older kids and adults will also find the games to be a great brain workout.

“In a crowded market for kids apps, TVOKids’ rigorous game development process and formal research set us apart and allow us to create resources like *Hop, Frog, Hop!* and *Ribbit, Frog, Ribbit!* that have a direct impact on children’s learning,” said Pat Ellingson, TVO’s Creative Head of Children’s Media. “Our commitment to research is part of the reason TVOKids is considered the most trusted and most educational children’s media brand in Canada.”

Since 2005, TVO’s formal research partnership with OISE has helped provide evidence that TVOKids resources are delivering on their educational objectives and equipping kids to be successful digital learners. This 2012 Working Memory study builds on a study conducted in 2010 that showed that kids who used TVOKids resources as part of a family literacy program had significantly greater gains in early reading, early writing and phonological awareness than those who did not.

About TVOKids

TVOKids exists to help Ontario’s 21st century learners be successful in school and in life. Developed for every kind of young learner and covering virtually all Ontario Curriculum areas for grades JK-5, TVO-produced children’s programs, web activities and mobile apps are built in collaboration with TVO’s on-staff educator and student and teacher-tested to ensure specific educational objectives are met. According to a 2011 Ipsos Reid poll, Ontarians rate TVOKids both the most trusted and most educational children’s media brand in Canada. TVOKids airs daily on TVO from 6 am to 7 pm. The award-winning tvokids.com is home to over 170 educational games and TVOKids offers a growing inventory of educational [mobile apps](#) for all platforms.

About TVO

TVO is Ontario’s public educational media organization and a trusted source of interactive educational content that informs, inspires and stimulates curiosity and thought. TVO’s vision is to empower people to be engaged citizens of Ontario through educational media.

TVO is funded primarily by the Province of Ontario. As a registered charity, TVO depends on the support of its sponsors and individual donors. For more information, visit tvo.org.

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Cable channel 2 (may vary in some areas)
Bell TV channel 265
TVO HD on Bell Fibe TV channel 1265
Rogers TVO HD channel 580
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Websites:

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