



TabletClass Home School Math Curriculum: Interview with John Zimmerman, President of TabletClass Math

This past year, a new homeschool math curriculum made its debut and home educators across the nation are enjoying the many benefits of this new online home school curriculum.

I met John Zimmerman, president of TabletClass Math earlier this year; our homeschool math curriculum wasn't quite working and John asked me to try his new online math program.

Through TabletClass Math's clear and understandable delivery of advanced math concepts, my daughter's math struggles quickly ended *and* she completed the Algebra 1 course in record time, after struggling for months with the curriculum we've always used.

I had the privilege of interviewing John Zimmerman to help you get to know him and his new homeschool math curriculum; he also offers some great tips to homeschool parents, from his experience as a math teacher.

If you are searching for easy-to-use math curriculum or are not satisfied with the program you are currently using, take time to learn about TabletClass Math; the math program for middle school and high school students that is sure to become a household name.

John, tell us a little about yourself; why did you become a teacher and why do you like to teach mathematics?

I became a teacher because I love helping people by building their self-confidence and making them feel like they can achieve their dreams. As a young person I remember those teachers that took the time to get to know me and were always encouraging me to go after my dreams.

A big influence on my life was joining the Marine Corps when I was 17. I learned early on that if you believe in yourself you can overcome anything. I spent many years in the service and even had the chance to serve in the Persian Gulf (Iraq operations). Through those experiences I saw so many people overcome difficult tasks because they believed in themselves and they were surrounded by leaders and motivators.

After my years in the military I worked in corporate America, but I never had a sense of satisfaction because I did not feel like I was making an impact on people's lives. As someone who loves math I decided that teaching would be a perfect career for my passion. I love teaching math because I'm able to help others learn how to solve problems and gain skills that will prepare them for their future.

Why did you start TabletClass Math?

TabletClass started as an idea I had teaching math in public schools. Basically, I figured if I could make video instruction just like the instruction I actually taught in class it could be a valuable resource for my students to get ahead or catch up. As it worked out, the concept was much more powerful than my initial expectations. Not only did my students love my videos, they were learning more in less time and my classes ran much smoother.

Knowing that I was onto something really special and helpful, I started to research and refine the ways I made my math videos. I always used my student's feedback as my compass on what direction I should focus. My students were my customers and I was building video instruction that they wanted. Convinced that I could impact many more students with my videos using technology and the internet I made the decision to focus on building a math educational system (www.tabletclass.com) that students everywhere could benefit from.

Why do you want to reach the homeschool market?

Homeschoolers are some of the most courageous and passionate people I know. The fact that homeschoolers take their children's education into their own hands speaks volumes about their spirit and dedication. TabletClass was designed for independent learning with a focus on middle and high school math. As homeschoolers started to find TabletClass they loved the benefits of our program and as we learned more about homeschoolers it was apparent that TabletClass was a perfect product for the homeschool market.

What makes TabletClass different from, or better than other homeschool math programs like Saxon, Teaching Textbooks or Math-U-See?

I would not say TabletClass is better than other homeschool programs (that's a judgment for each family). However, I would say TabletClass offers a unique approach in learning math.

The main quality that makes TabletClass different is that we offer students complete, in-depth and "actual" instruction from a real math teacher, myself. Our members enthusiastically report that my videos make them feel like I'm talking to them—it's a very personable experience. Also, most students like my teaching style; I explain and coach rather than speak and present. My style of teaching is easy to listen to and I'm

always focused on keeping students interested and motivated. Homeschoolers all over the country and overseas love my instructional approach and it has proven to be highly effective.

One last aspect that makes TabletClass stand out is our software. TabletClass is much more than just videos online...we offer students powerful management tools to help them track their progress and the ability to download and watch videos on mobile devices.

Is there a specific teaching method that you use for TabletClass Math?

I don't use a single specific method for teaching. My lessons are rich in all learning styles; they are visual, auditory and hands on. The total combination of these qualities in my videos makes for excellent student engagement and retention. As to the way our course material is organized I take a traditional approach of chapters and sections. Each section has a full lesson followed by many practice problems and solution videos.

Is there a certain kind of student or learner that TabletClass would most benefit?

All students can benefit greatly from using TabletClass. Our learning system that can respond to many different type of student needs. Of course TabletClass is designed for the independent learner, but we have many students (including public school) that use our program to supplement other curriculums they are using.

You have told me that TabletClass Math works well for students with learning disabilities. Can you provide more insight for parents who are homeschooling students with learning difficulties or problems?

Yes, TabletClass has helped many students with learning disabilities. From what these families tell us, the reason while they have been successful is that they have been able to customize TabletClass to fit their needs. Students with disabilities have the ability to control their learning process to compensate and overcome a challenge. This flexibility and control was designed into our program; so no matter what the challenge, we have seen that when students are given clear and understandable instruction, a flexible learning environment and control over the pace of learning they can be successful.

My daughter, who used to hate Math, thoroughly enjoyed your Algebra 1 course. She said that it felt like you were teaching her one-on-one. Is there a benefit in the way that you teach the TabletClass Math lessons versus programs that show a teacher teaching a classroom full of students?

I believe the way I teach in my videos, making students feel like I'm teaching them one-on-one, has been the key to their success in learning math. When it comes to education nothing is more important than the teacher's ability to connect with students. Moreover teachers that communicate passion, common sense, logic and experience have the

greatest positive impact on their students. TabletClass Math is just a vehicle that I use to expand my classroom. I view each member as my own personal student.

Why didn't you use a video of yourself teaching versus just showing an "electronic" tablet (not sure what the name of the white board is that you use in your lessons)?

I believe making a video with me at a board would be limiting- I could not use the visual features in the whiteboard software I use to model problems. Also it's my belief that students do not connect to a teacher because they are "seeing" them, rather they feel more of a connection based upon what the teacher is saying and how they are saying it. As your daughter has discovered, my teaching style is relaxed and friendly and it's this ability to make students feel at ease that really makes my instruction very effective.

Every now and then I heard my teen laugh while doing her TabletClass lessons; she found you and your lessons very engaging. Did you struggle with the transition from teaching a class full of students to talking to a screen?

Actually making math videos came quite naturally to me...I teach math in my videos the same way I teach in person. Also I knew that students "tune out" of math videos that presented material in a formal manner or sounded rehearsed. I will say that producing all our course videos took years to develop but all the hard work was well worth it. The personal satisfaction that my efforts are helping students and families everywhere is extremely rewarding- there is no better pay off than that.

Over the years, I have used a couple math programs with my children. A frustration is when my student's final answer is correct but their actual solution or work doesn't match the one given in the solutions manual. My daughter noticed that you taught multiple ways of figuring out a question. You would also show the best way to solve the problem. Can you comment further on that?

Showing and fully explaining a solution is essential to learning math. Students can have different approaches to solve many types of problems especially word problems. However, in order for students to be successful in finding a solution they need to understand various core math skills.

I focus on building these skills first and then show students how these skills can be applied as a tool for problem solving. Also, I provide many example problems and I take the time to fully demonstrate the process to find the solution. Furthermore, I like to discuss the various aspects of a problem and what skills and concepts are needed to solve it- this is another reason why I believe my instruction is unique and effective.

When completing upper level math courses, many students think they will never use it in their real life. My teen couldn't see how she would ever use the information in her lessons later on; which is one of the reasons why she didn't enjoy math because it seemed pretty useless to her. How do you make the connection between math in the classroom to the real world?

I connect math to the “real world” because I have worked and experienced the “real world” and know the importance of mathematics. From business to military operations mathematics is all about gathering information and drawing conclusions. It's this analytical skill that I try to develop in my students.

Regardless of whether a student wants to be a plumber, engineer or business person they must know how to work with numbers and use math as a tool that provides direction and guidance. Moreover, as our economy becomes more high tech and competitive students really need to invest in learning as much math and science as possible for their future.

TabletClass is mostly student-oriented. What is the parent's role?

Great question. As a parent myself I think the most important role we have is to support our children emotionally. Motivating them and encouraging them to work through problems especially when they are difficult. I tell homeschooling parents to focus on being a mentor/coach (managing the program and pace) because TabletClass will provide all the instruction. TabletClass has a real advantage over many other curriculums, in that parents do not have to be directly responsible or have the pressure to teach their child more advance concepts in mathematics. TabletClass was designed around great instruction allowing homeschooling parents to focus on other areas aside from teaching course material.

What are the most common math problems (learning or teaching) you see homeschool families encountering?

One of the most common problems I see in the homeschool community is parents trying to find the right curriculum as their child transitions into middle and high school math. Parents struggle to find a sense of security and certainty that they are selecting a math program that's right for their child. Often times a program that has been successful in elementary level math does not work for their child in middle or high school math.

Another problem I see is that parents are faced with so many curriculum options that evaluating what works is difficult. Lastly, I have seen how stressful homeschooling can become when both the parent and child are frustrated in learning math. When a homeschooling family finds themselves in this situation they need to reach out and find the support of others- they need to change their learning dynamics. A positive environment is so important for effective learning to take place, so parents need to focus on this as a top priority.

Do you have any helpful tips for parents teaching math at home?

There are so many tips I can provide, but I'd like to focus my comments on middle and high school math. First, make sure your math program will fully prepare your child for upper level math. Don't just select a program because your child likes it (or thinks it easy) make sure that the curriculum has high academic standards. The SAT/ACT and college mathematics are not getting any easier, so homeschoolers really want to look for rich and comprehensive math programs.

Next, students really need the experience of a math teacher when learning algebra and beyond. Parents should ask themselves who is teaching my child math when considering a learning program? My best advice is to find an experienced, qualified and proven math teacher. Of course I think TabletClass is a great option for homeschooling families because of my qualifications and experience but many communities have great teachers so I would strongly encourage homeschoolers to try to connect with these experienced professionals.

Lastly, I would stress establishing good study habits. Homeschoolers like other students want to focus on organization, neatness, note taking and time management as these are qualities that are the foundation to academic success.

Interview by: Heather Gneco of PEAH (Parents Educating at Home)

You can homeschool your child successfully and affordably! From her personal experience as a home educator and group leader, Heather Gneco shares valuable insight to help you increase time, save money and provide your children the best homeschool experience possible. For more homeschooling success tips, visit:

<http://www.homeschool-curriculum-savings.com>

TabletClass Math Courses

TabletClass Math currently offers the following homeschool math courses: Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1&2, Geometry, Intermediate Algebra, GED Math Prep, and College Algebra. Visit TabletClass Math to learn more about their easy and understandable homeschool math courses for middle school and high school, or to sign-up for their free trial offer.

<http://www.tabletclass.com>

TabletClass Curriculum Review

Homeschooling teen gives you an inside look at TabletClass and how this new online homeschool math program helped her to quickly overcome her struggles with Algebra; read her review of TabletClass' affordable online homeschool classes.

<http://www.homeschool-curriculum-savings.com/treview>

[Learn how you can save 50% on TabletClass Math...](#)

TabletClass Math Offers Exclusive Savings Through PEAH

TabletClass is offering two Buy-One-Get-One-Free offers to all PEAH's homeschool friends (that's you!) with our special coupon code. **Type "PEAH PROMO" in the School Name field when signing up for the trial offer.**

When you decide to buy, please follow the directions below to receive your savings:

First Offer:

1. Buy a 6 month program and get the second 6 months for free (a one-year program for the cost of 6 months). Steps: Just purchase the 6 month plan of your current account - after your purchase, your membership term will be extended to one (1) year. **Make sure you list "PEAH PROMO" as your school.**

Or, Second Offer:

2. Buy one course for one year and get a second course for a year at no cost - that's two courses for the price of one! Steps: Just purchase the one-year plan of your current course. Next, create another trial account (select any course we offer).

Make sure you use a different username but use the same email address as your first account. The trial account will be extended to reflect a one-year membership. **Make sure you list "PEAH PROMO" as your school.**

To sign-up for a free trial offer or purchase a TabletClass Math course, visit:

<http://www.tabletclass.com>

For more information on the TabletClass discount through PEAH, visit:

<http://www.homeschool-curriculum-savings.com/tcdiscout>

To read Heather's review of TabletClass Math, visit:

<http://www.homeschool-curriculum-savings.com/tabletclass>