

## Book Creator

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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bookcreator.com">www.bookcreator.com</a>
<b>Title</b>	Book Creator
<b>Author</b>	Red Jumper Limited
<b>Type of Product</b>	E-book creator and reader
<b>Platform</b>	The Google Chrome browser (the only compatible browser) and the Book Creator App on iOS devices
<b>Hardware Requirements</b>	An internet-accessible device (computer, tablet, smartphone)
<b>Software requirements</b>	A Google Chrome browser and iOS platform
<b>Supplementary Software</b>	Moodle “Reader” plug-in (if used within Moodle)
<b>Price</b>	Both free and paid-upgraded memberships are available. Google Chrome browser: \$60 or \$120 per year per teacher. iPad App varies by country: \$4.99 USD per user (teacher and students); ₩5,900 Korean won per user.

### Introduction

*Book Creator* is a tool which enables users to create, read, and share digital books. *Book Creator* was developed in 2011 by parents who wanted to support reading development. Since then, 30 million e-books in over 90 countries have been written with *Book Creator* (The Story of Book Creator, n.d.). Although *Book Creator* was initially created to enhance the reading

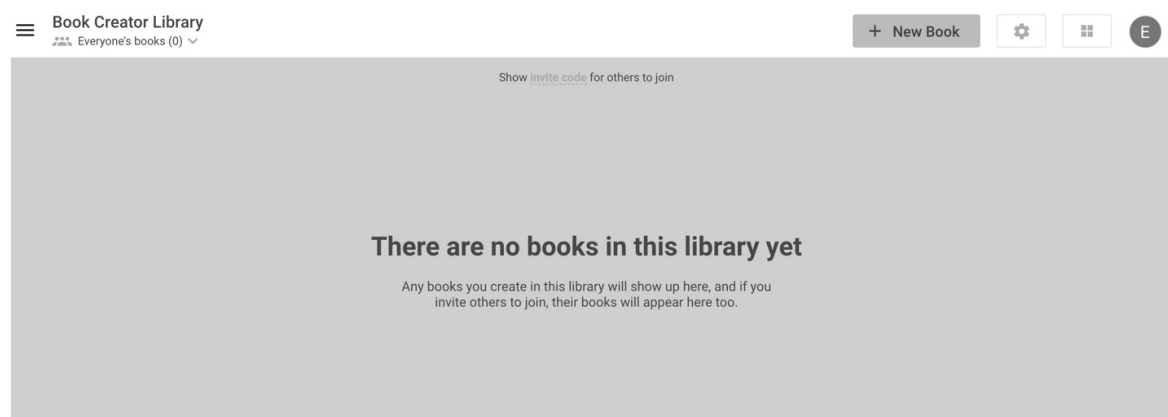
ability of children whose first language was English, it can be useful for a range of users, from pre-K12 to higher education. It can also accommodate users with various proficiency levels. The working language in the tool is determined by the user's location. Nonetheless, users can type any language into the book as long as they have access to the language setting on their device.

Both teachers and students can use the tool. However, it is a teacher-led tool and students need to be added to the virtual library (i.e., a built-in feature in the tool) in order to be able to create, share, and read books. A teacher can join the tool with either a free or an upgraded membership. With a free membership, users can save up to 40 books in one virtual library. *Book Creator* is available via the web or the app on Google Store and App Store. Depending on the platform through which *Book Creator* is used, the membership price varies. If a teacher uses the tool on Google Chrome, the annual membership price is \$60 (3 libraries and 60 books per library) or \$120 (10 libraries and 100 books per library). For both paid memberships, a real-time collaboration feature is available.

This review will first describe the main aspects of *Book Creator* (creating, sharing, and reading) and will then evaluate the tool in terms of its potential support for language learners.

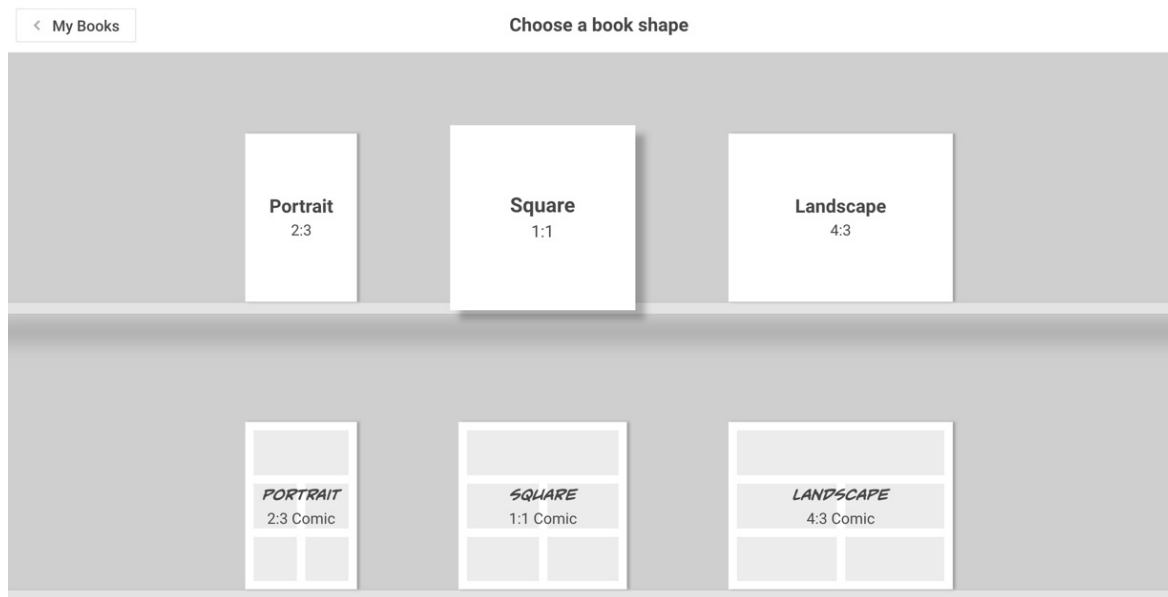
## Creating Books

Teachers can sign in with Google, Office 365, Clever, or another e-mail account; they will then be asked to answer questions about the grade level and the subjects they are teaching. Students can also sign in with Google, Office 365, or a Clever account; to join a specific library, students can use either a QR code or a code given by the teacher. Once signing in, users are led to a virtual library where they are allowed to create and read books. Figure 1 shows the main page of the library. Creating a new book is available by clicking the yellow button '+ New Book' on the right top corner of the screen.



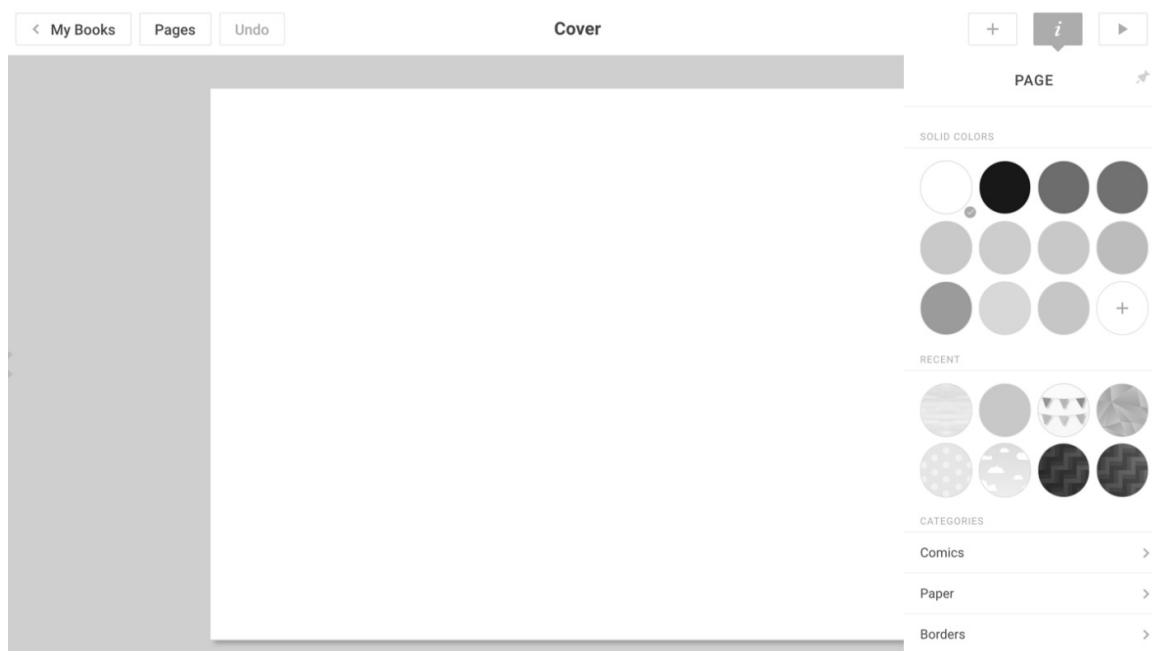
**Figure 1.** The main page of the library

When creating a new book, the user begins by choosing the book shape (see Figure 2). There are two types of layouts provided in the tool, traditional layouts and comic book layouts. Both types provide three different forms of the layouts: portrait, square, and landscape.



**Figure 2. Available layouts to create a new book**

After selecting the layout, the user is taken to the book's cover page. Here, various features are provided for users to design the book and to add content. As shown in Figure 3, a variety of design features are available including background colors, comics, paper, borders, patterns, and textures. Adding more pages to a book is done by selecting the blue arrow button '>' on the right side of the page. In the top left corner, the 'Pages' button allows users to manage pages in the e-book with more features such as copying, moving, inserting, and deleting pages.



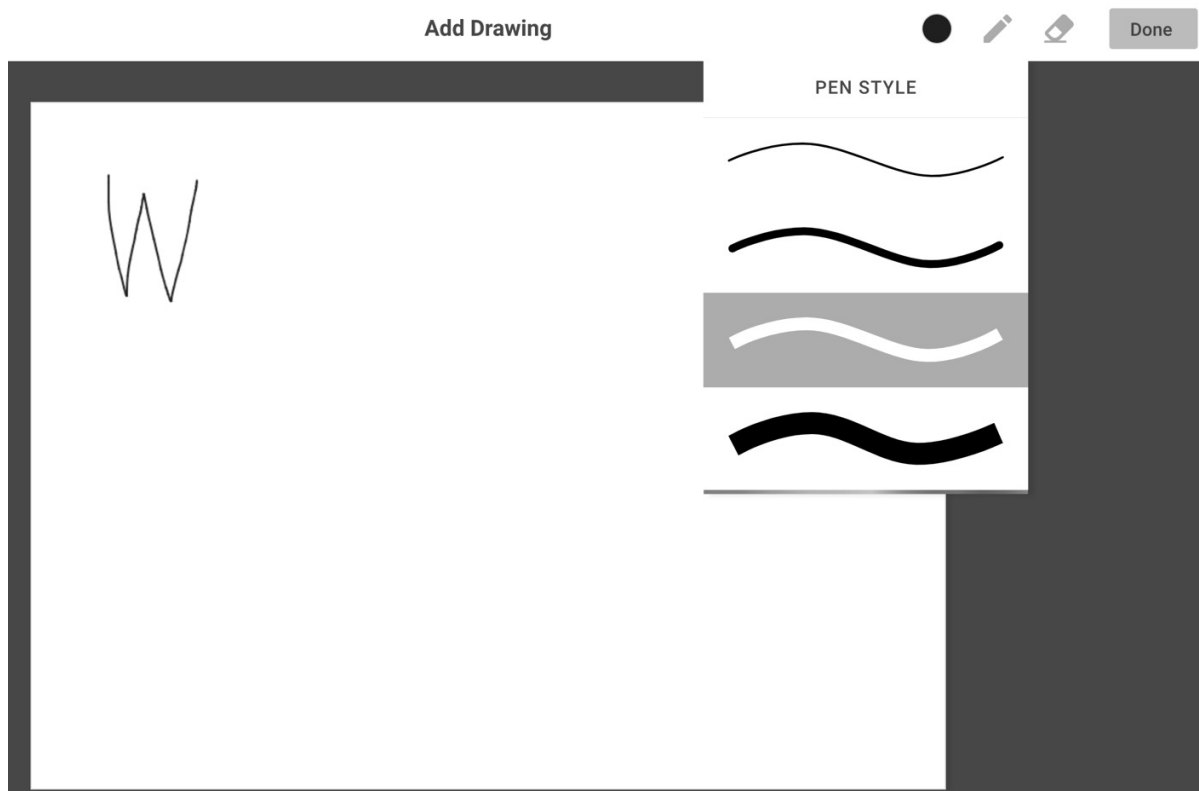
**Figure 3. Choosing a page design**

In terms of adding content, there are five options: using a pen, adding a textbox, adding a voice or video recordings, importing files, and adding images (see Figure 4). Written text can be

added to the page by typing in a text box. Users may draw with their finger on tablet devices or hold a mouse cursor and draw the text on the computer (see Figure 5).



**Figure 4.** Adding content to the page



**Figure 5.** Adding text to the page with a pen

*Book Creator* also allows users to add hypertext with an embedded web link or a web link itself. Figures 6a and 6b show an example of hypertext where the underlined words are linked

to an online dictionary. Figure 6a shows that four words “cuisine, features, ingredients, and recommendation” are hyperlinked; when selected, each hyperlink opens a new page to a definition in an online dictionary (Figure 6b).



Figure 6a. Using hypertext to create a page

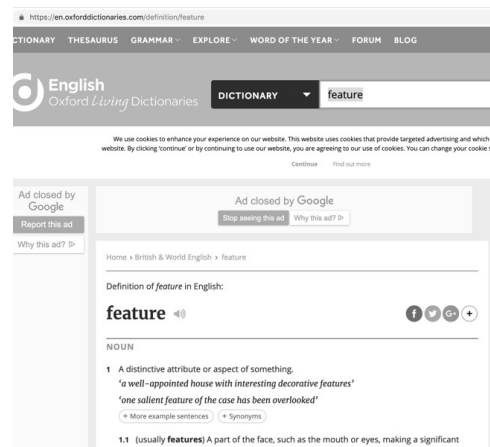


Figure 6b. Hyper-linked page

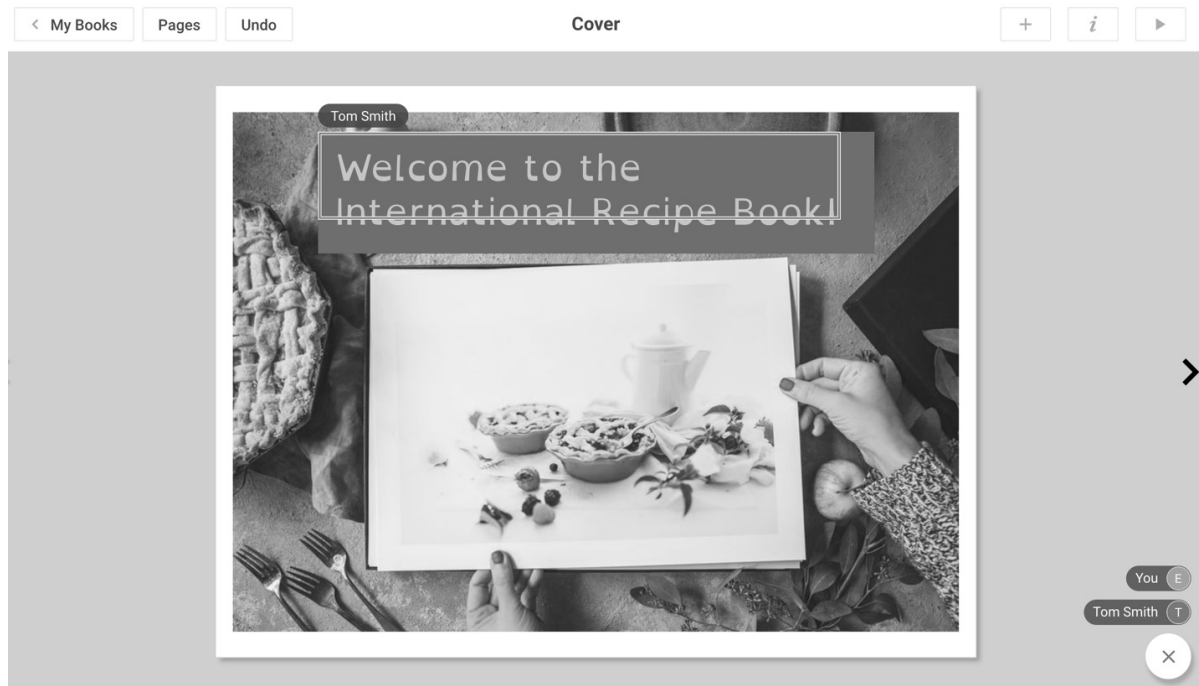
In addition, *Book Creator* is synced with Google Images and Maps, and it also allows users to upload their own files, either from their computer or from Google Drive. For example, PowerPoints and PDFs can be embedded as an icon into the page, which allows users to click and download the file. Music can also be added to the page on an iPad from any saved music files, and the Chrome version allows a sound file to be added as well. Figure 7 shows an example page with embedded files, a web link, and a map.



Figure 7. Adding files to a book

Additionally, a real-time collaboration feature enables users to work on the same book synchronously. This option is available for paid members using Google Chrome; as of April 2019, a 14-day free trial is offered. Once the real-time Collaboration is turned on, anyone who has access to the library and the book can edit the book at the same time. As seen in Figure 8,

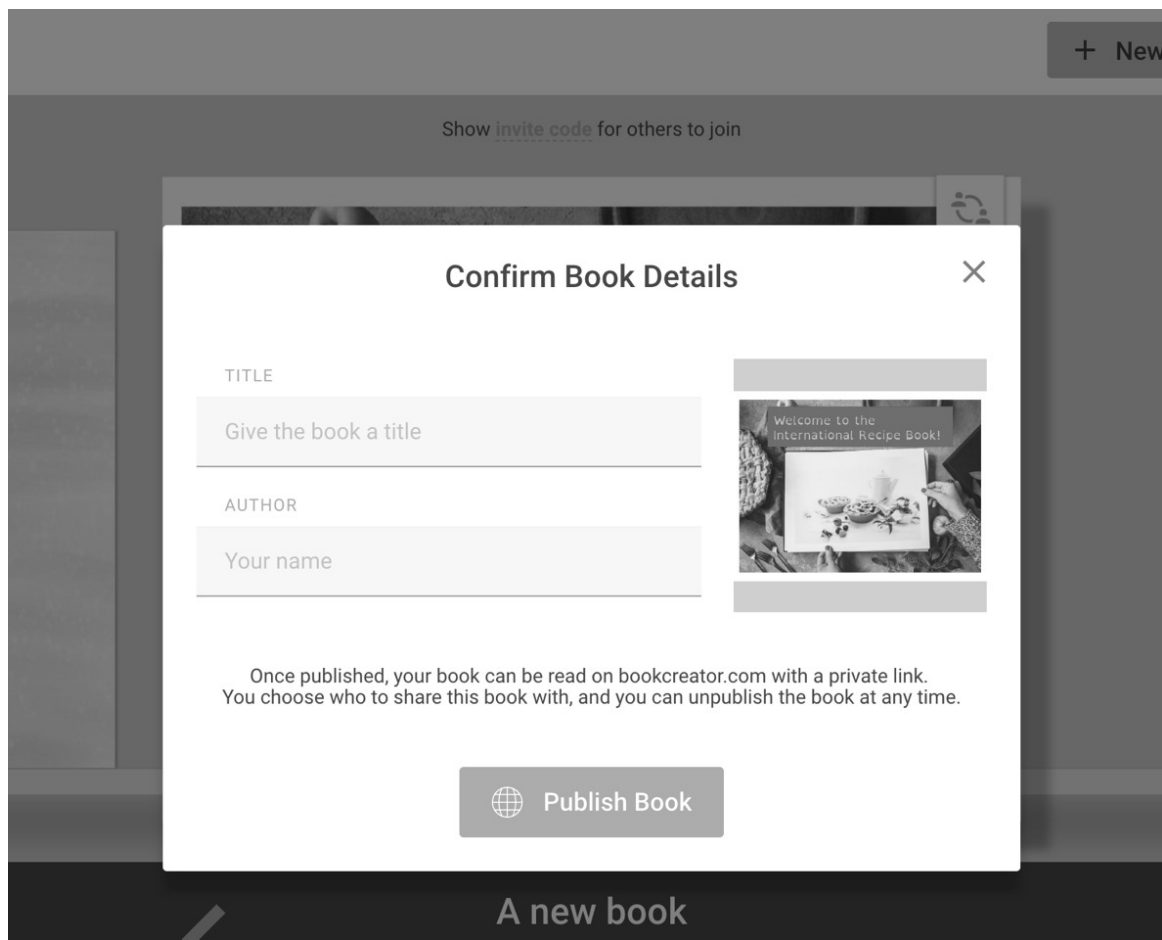
the right bottom corner of each page displays all current collaborators; the page also shows where on the page the collaborators are working.



**Figure 8. Real-time collaboration**

## Sharing and Reading Books

Upon completion, a book can be published in a variety of ways. First, completed books can be shared with authorized users in the virtual library. For example, students with an access code are allowed to read the books shared in *Book Creator*'s virtual library. Second, books can be exported as a PDF, a video file, or an EPUB file to be shared with people who do not have a *Book Creator* membership. Books published as an EPUB file are readable on other e-book reader apps such as *iBooks* and *Kindle*. In addition, books can be shared as a web link. Once published, the user's book is available on the tool's webpage ([www.bookcreator.com](http://www.bookcreator.com)) with a private link. The user can select with whom the book is shared and deactivate the shared link at any time. Figure 9 shows a pop-up image of the publishing online feature.



**Figure 9. Publishing books online**

In addition to writing and publishing books, *Book Creator* lets users read books in multiple modes. One example is “Read to Me”, which is a text-to-speech feature where the virtual voice assistant, such as Microsoft voice, reads the texts aloud. Words can be highlighted as they are read, and the reading speed can be adjusted. As of April 2019, 27 languages were available in the Read to Me feature. The available languages are Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian Bokmal, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, and Turkish. For English, various dialects of English are available including American, British, Australian, Irish, Indian, and South African English.

## Evaluation

The major purpose of *Book Creator* is for educators and students to create and share their own digital books. This purpose seems to be well realized in *Book Creator* through the various features offered. Here, *Book Creator* is evaluated in terms of its design, content, and pedagogical implications.

To begin with, the interface of *Book Creator* is very user-friendly as users can easily navigate the app. With the Google Chrome browser and the *Book Creator* app on iPad, it runs without installing additional programs. Also, the layouts and buttons to operate *Book Creator* are very

simple and intuitive. Therefore, users of all ages with basic computer skills can easily use *Book Creator*.

Second, *Book Creator* can be a way to support task-based language teaching (TBLT) in English language classrooms. As Nunan (2004) defines, TBLT considers language as a tool for communication; thus, the classroom work – tasks – are to convey meaning. For example, for a lesson about giving directions either in English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) contexts, a teacher can require students to complete a task to create a local guide map with *Book Creator*. To complete the task, students' focus is not on specific grammatical knowledge but on expressing meaning by using the target language. Thus, by using the book creation tool, the language learners would be encouraged to focus on communication rather than paying attention to the forms, which is the key to the second language acquisition (González-Lloret, 2015).

Additionally, the 'real time collaboration' feature in *Book Creator* encourages collaborative learning, which enhances learners' interaction and language acquisition (Mackey & Gass, 2006). This feature allows a computer-mediated interaction between peers. While interacting with peers on the web through the tool, students engage in various interactions such as the negotiation of meaning or form by exchanging feedback. The interaction that students experience online with their peers could contribute to students' language acquisition (Lai & Li, 2011).

Finally, *Book Creator* could be useful for developing receptive and productive skills. In terms of receptive skills, both aural and written input could be embedded in the book, which provide various modes of input for readers. *Book Creator* also provides enhanced input; for example, the hypertext feature can include extra resources, such as providing cues or description of target grammar. Furthermore, the text-to-speech feature might help raise students' awareness of segmental features or dialectal features of English. To support the development of productive skills, numerous activities are possible. For example, students could record themselves doing role-plays or skits, put the video files in the e-book, and use the e-book materials for their speaking class. For writing, students can easily type their text in the book and get feedback using the real-time collaboration feature. Therefore, the utilization of *Book Creator* in a language class does not seem to be limited in one specific skill.

## Summary

Overall, *Book Creator* is a useful educational technology for the English language learning classroom. Supporting TBLT and collaborative learning, *Book Creator* can contribute to teaching integrated skills of English. It has strong potential as a language learning tool to create language learning materials in aural, written, and visual modes. It might also facilitate students' use of the target language in various language learning contexts. Thus, its contribution to computer-assisted language learning seems valuable.

## References

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### **About the Reviewer**

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