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## Explain Everything

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<b>Title</b>	Explain Everything
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://explaineverything.com/">https://explaineverything.com/</a>
<b>Developer</b>	Explain Everything, Inc.
<b>Contact Information</b>	<p><b>United States</b>  P.O. Box 1019, Ridgefield, CT 06877, USA  <a href="mailto:info@explaineverything.com">info@explaineverything.com</a></p> <p><b>Poland</b>  Grabarska 1, 50-079 Wrocław, Poland  <a href="mailto:info@explaineverything.com">info@explaineverything.com</a></p>
<b>Type of product</b>	Online software for developing collaboration between students
<b>Minimum Hardware/software requirements</b>	<p><b>iOS devices</b> need to be running iOS 11.4 or higher.  <b>Android devices</b> need to be running Android KitKat 4.4.</p>
<b>Operating System</b>	iOS and Android
<b>Registration</b>	None
<b>Price</b>	<p><b>Individuals and Teams Plans:</b>  Free plan for starters: \$0  Individuals: \$6.99 per month - \$69.99 per year  Teams: \$11.99 per month - \$95.99 per year</p> <p><b>Education Plans:</b>  Free plan for starters: \$0  Educators: \$3.00 per month – \$24.99 per year  Education Group: \$0.90 per month – \$8.99 per year</p>

Using technology in teaching may help to meet the expectations that traditional education is unable to fulfill (Gunuç & Babacan, 2018). Therefore, in designing computer-assisted language learning (CALL), teachers may consider how technology might support standards and learning outcomes. This review focuses on educational technology standards for English language learners to evaluate the *Explain Everything* application. The criteria for review have been curated and adopted from the TESOL Technology Standards Framework (Healey et al., 2008).

These criteria focus on performing basic functions, working collaboratively and individually, and providing opportunities to create content. Here is a list of the curated criteria:

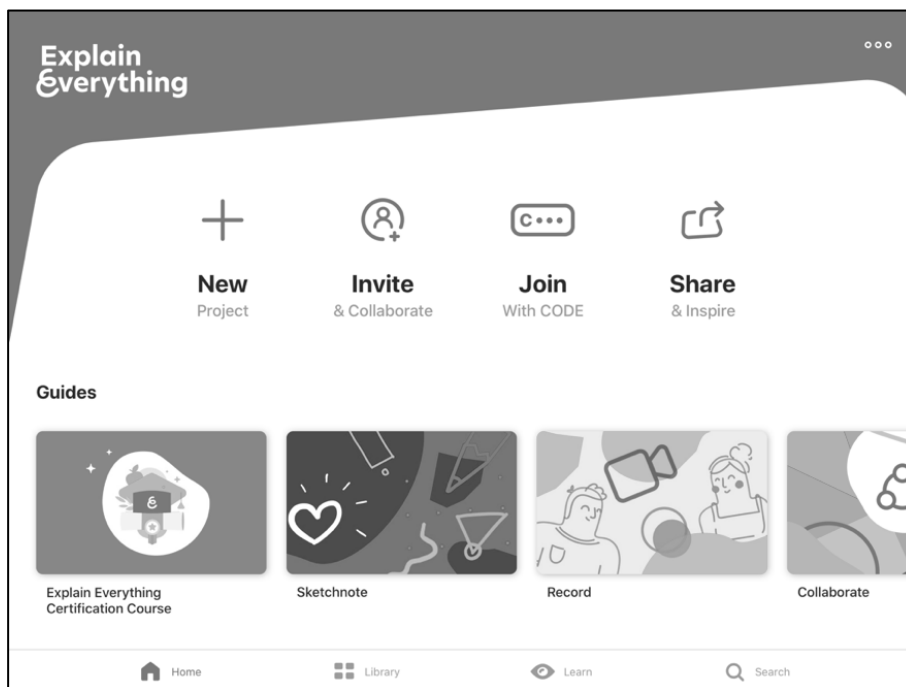
1. The app provides opportunities to perform basic functions on digital devices;
2. The app provides opportunities to use technology-based productivity tools collaboratively and individually in order to enhance their language learning competence; and
3. The app provides opportunities to create content to share online or offline.

This review will be divided into three sections: first, a general description of *Explain Everything* is presented. In the second section, I will evaluate the program based on the criteria. In the last section, the review will provide some general recommendations for language teachers to consider if they decide to use *Explain Everything*.

## General Program Description

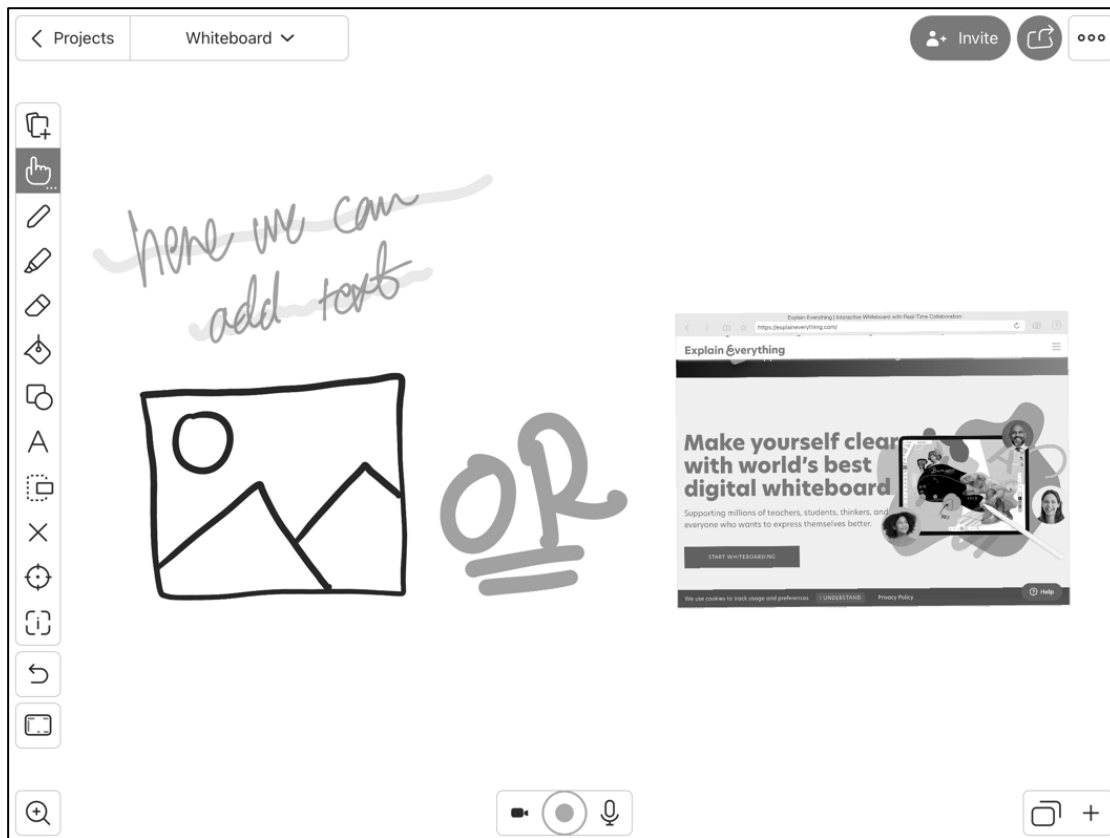
*Explain Everything* is a multi-feature web-based, content-free, whiteboard application designed to support students' project collaboration and production of visual content. It can be used for multiple purposes, such as brainstorming, planning, and mind mapping. This application can also be used with a wide range of users with diverse linguistic backgrounds. While Explain Everything is suitable for other languages, this review focuses on English language learners.

Figure 1 shows the starting screen of the application. Once the application is open, this screen allows the users to start a new project, invite others to a project, join a project using a code, or share a project. It also shows some guides and webinars that support using the application.

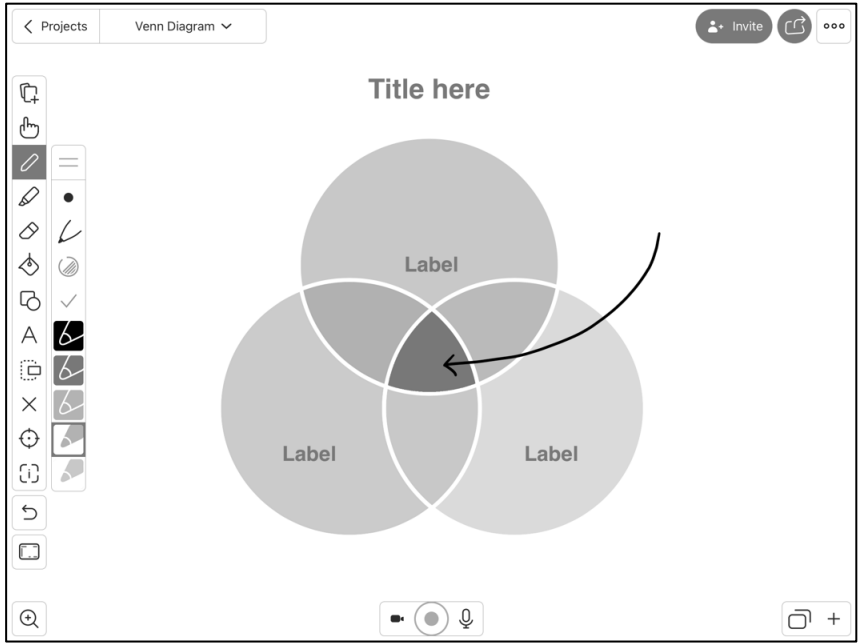


**Figure 1. The Starting Screen**

When starting a new project, users will see and select from three main options: Blank Canvas Option, Template Option, or Files Option. The Blank Canvas Option allows users to start with a blank space to build a project from scratch. Figure 2 shows an example of a blank canvas with some preliminary ideas on it. The Template Option allows users to select a template to start their collaborative projects (Figure 3). Template choices include an empty whiteboard, blackboard, video explanation, among others. Also, to save time, users can build and save templates if they want to use them for more than one project. Briefly, these three options are, in fact, a simulation of a physical classroom. For example, the Blank Canvas is a simulation of a class project where students scratch ideas, mind-maps, or outlines. While the second option, the Template Option, is a simulation of what a teacher may provide students to complete for a particular project. The last option, Files Option, is a simulation of a physical class where a teacher provides a file to the students to work on.

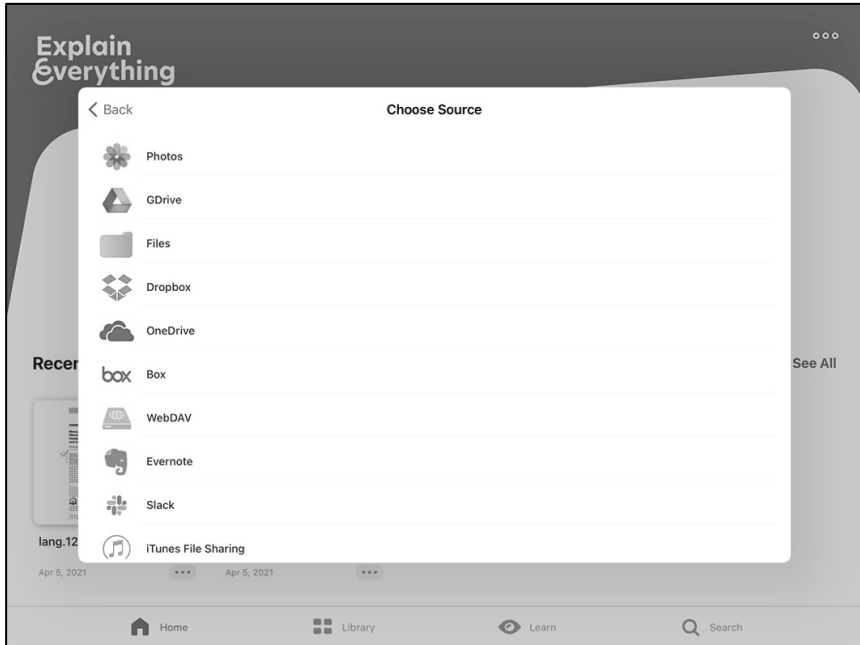


**Figure 2. An Example of a Blank Canvas**

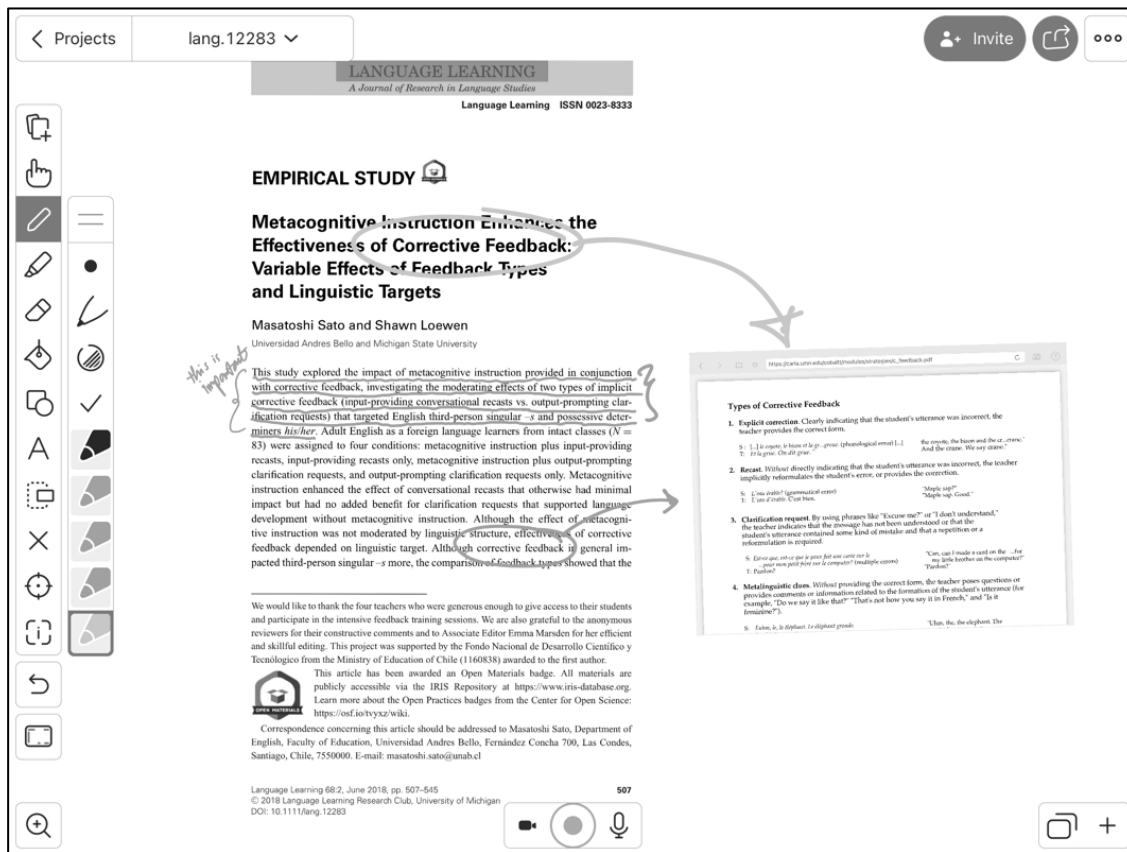


**Figure 3. An Example of a Diagram Template**

The Files Option allows users to upload and work (e.g., annotating readings, creating vocabulary graphics, adding clipart to the readings) with a file from various sources, as shown in Figure 4. Upon uploading a file to the workspace, students can use the editing tools to work with the file, as shown on the left side of Figure 5. These editing tools allow students to edit the file the way they see fit. For example, if they need to include additional elements, they can use “Insert New,” which allows them to insert a Picture, Video, Browser, Scan, or an Equation, Audio, Existing Image or Video, File, Clipart, Image/GIF from the web, Existing Audio, and/or a placeholder.



**Figure 4. Sources of Files**



**Figure 5. A pdf File with Annotations**

Explain Everything provides students with many tools that could be used in different projects. It is possible to categorize these tools as text enhancement, voice/ video enhancement, visual enhancement, and universal tasks/ functions tools. Text enhancement tools include a highlighter, paint color, an eraser, and others (as showed earlier) enabling students to work with a text such as highlighting annotating. Voice/Video enhancement tools include using a camera or a microphone to support real-time communication where students can talk and see each other while working on a project. In addition, there is a recording button, which keeps a record of students' contributions to each project. Visual enhancement tools are built-in pictures, videos, clip arts which users can use to add clip art to a text. These tools can support and increase students' comprehension as they add visuals by themselves, which would be more relevant and helpful for them. Universal tasks/functions include cutting, copying, pasting, saving, exporting, and inserting. These tools or functions could be categorized as universal functions as they are commonly used across applications. Using these tools, students can, for example, cut a specific part of a text or image and past it in the same project space. Besides providing all of these tools, Explain Everything has guidelines and webinars within the platform for users. Another tool is the inviting tool, in which learners can invite others to their project and collaboratively work on a project.

## Evaluation

This section evaluates the application based on the Technology Standards for Language Learners from TESOL Technology Standards Framework (Healey et al., 2008). This evaluation focuses on how Explain Everything supports the following three criteria. These specific criteria have been curated and adopted since they are more relevant to the learners and the use of technology.

### ***1. The app provides opportunities to perform basic functions on digital devices***

Explain Everything supports students' learning and performing basic functions on digital devices such as inserting a media, inserting a text, duplicating an object or a part of the project. Explain Everything does not focus on students' understanding of how to use these tools themselves; instead, it focuses on using them to build content. For example, if a learner needs to add a video to their project, Explain Everything provides the inserting tool for them to use without teaching them how to use it. A recommendation to work around this limitation, the teacher needs to provide basic training on how to use these tools. Another possible way to accommodate this limitation is by searching Explain Everything library to see if it provides training on how to use these tools. With the focus in how to use these tools, Explain Everything is a good tool that allows learners to perform this basic function that learners may use in other applications.

### ***2. The app provides opportunities to use technology-based productivity tools collaboratively and individually in order to enhance their language learning competence***

Explain Everything supports student collaboration and individual work by providing the option to invite other learners to their project if they need or want to. This feature gives students a chance to share responsibilities, negotiate meaning and making decisions (Storch, 2013). For example, the teacher can upload a reading in PDF format and direct students to collaboratively annotate the file (shown above in Figure 5). Explain Everything provides the opportunity for students to interact with each other and makes collaboration more effective, as it allows learners to interact in real-time and work to analyze, annotate, and develop content. While working with each other, Explain Everything helps learners to see others' contributions by indicating the name of the other person and which part of the project they added or are working on.

### ***3. The app provides opportunities to create content to share online or offline.***

Explain Everything provides an array of opportunities to create content to share with peers or a wider audience, online or offline. Since it is a content-free platform, Explain Everything gives an opportunity for students to be the content creators (see Guiller & Smith, 2021). Explain Everything is an effective tool to meet this criterion as it allows learners to share their content online with built-in tools. For example, learners can share their content on social media, and the application helps by providing sharing options to export the content. Then, learners can upload it to any social media domain they would prefer to share/show their work. For example, learners may export their content in video or picture format, insert it in their own Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or other social media account. Also, Explain Everything helps students to embed their work on their own web pages. For example, if the content is ready, learners can click on the "share" icon then select the web page option, which provides them with an embed code that they can use on their own web pages.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, *Explain Everything* meets the criteria noted above. It provides opportunities for students to perform basic functions on digital devices, but it does not teach them. This may be reflected in the purpose of the application, as it aims to provide a workspace with a variety of tools and focus on the content rather than teaching how to use these tools. To accommodate this, teachers might spare some time to go over the tools and options available for them to use. It can also be effective for providing opportunities for real-time collaboration and individual work. Finally, it provides ways to share the developed content with a wide range of audiences, from peers to social media audiences.

Connecting these features to the concept of developing language skills, *Explain Everything* support students' language by providing autonomy to develop content and real-life skills like negotiating meaning, decision making, and communicating their ideas. Using *Explain Everything*, students actively participate in the learning process and be responsible for their own learning (Erickson, 2007). What does that mean is that students are active learners and content creators who are taking responsibility for it, and this is one of the approaches that the application is relying on.

In addition to supporting digital and language literacies in general, *Explain Everything* could be implemented in nearly every aspect of teaching. For example, it could be used to give students the chance to brainstorm with each other in real-time, and it could be used as a notetaking app for students so they would have collaborative notes. Besides, it could be used to annotate a document, also known as social reading, since it allows students to import a file to the workspace and interact around it.

## References

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## About the Reviewer

Ali Asiri is a Ph.D. student in the Language, Literacy, and Technology program at Washington State University. He has a B.A. in the English Language, a M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language from Gonzaga University, and now he is pursuing a Ph.D. degree with a focus on Educational Technology for English Language teachers. Ali's research interest includes CALL Teacher Education and Educational Technologies.

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