



100 TESOL Activities for Teachers (Practical ESL/EFL Activities for the Communicative Classroom): A Book Review

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Publication details:

Received: December 20, 2021

Accepted: January 28, 2021

Published: February 03, 2022

Refuse to Be a Boring Teacher!

In a generation, where an average attention span only lasts from 10-15 minutes. It is very crucial for any teacher to capture the attention of students and make them fully engaged in class. That's why this book, "100 TESOL Activities for Teachers", comes in handy.

Shane Dixon's book is filled with practical tips and strategies for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). It is intended to provide teachers with perspective to some of the most common TESOL techniques and strategies recognized and used in the field. Most of which can be used with both younger and adult learners and in a variety of different contexts. The variation of activities and tips allows teachers to choose which ones they feel most comfortable using and which ones are most appropriate for their students' needs and proficiency level. One of the most interesting aspects of this book is how the author generously included printable worksheets which demonstrate realizations of activities described in the book. Teachers are also free to download and use it in their class.

The book is organized into 3 distinct parts. The first section introduces the top 10 common TESOL activities such as: information gap, classic Jigsaw, Cloze passage exercise, journals, dictation, Modified TPR (Total Physical Response), Think-Pair-Square-Share, Talking Tokens, Read Aloud or Reading Circles and Turn ANYTHING into an English Activity. What follows are subsections categorized according to the "four macro skills" reading, writing, listening and speaking. In this part, she provided varied activities specific to the skill a teacher would want to develop on that day in his/her class. She also included some icebreaker activities which are good for opening of classes, where students do not know one another yet.

The second section provides insight on how to prepare an ideal lesson plan for an ESL/EFL class. What I really love about this part is that the author did not only describe each lesson plan activity but also explained the "art of presenting" it in the class. To be honest, it broke stereotypes I had in mind on how to write a good lesson plan. For instance, with the learning objectives. Students tend to perform better when they are told WHAT they are doing and WHY they are doing it. That's what we all know, right? However, the author pointed out that teachers should refuse to impose the objectives to the class and tell them why it is important. It is advice to ask probing questions that will elicit answers from students rather than just telling them what to do.

Teachers then should share the objectives with students. There is no doubt that sharing objectives before a lesson plan is a great idea. As most of the learners would want to know where they are being led and will do better when they are given a target to aim at. We can invite learners to join in the goals, us, as instructors have for them. With a good objective, they can set their minds and hearts to have our goals become their own.

Moreover, presenting instructions could mean a lot of things to a lot of teachers, and how to present lessons can be done in varied ways. For traditionalists, presenting instruction means giving a lecture or presentation. However, in today's world, that would not be very much effective. Teachers, nowadays, can present instruction as a problem to be solved (problem-based curriculum) or as a case study or live experience (experiential curriculum). Information might be presented online with or without the teacher, as in the case in a blended learning environment. Now, we use the term "asynchronous class" to describe activities or learning tasks that students have to complete on their own.

The last section of the book includes printable worksheets that present the activities described in the book. The author provided links for the worksheet that teachers are free to download and distribute for classroom use. They can also recommend it to their colleagues and friends.

This book greatly helped me and I think any ESL teacher to develop the macro- skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) of students creatively and effectively. It contains techniques and strategies that will make the teaching -learning process fun and engaging. The author clearly explains the steps to help teachers use it in an actual classroom set- up. Although, it is not timely to the "new normal" we have today. But nothing lasts forever, when everything goes back to normal. Teachers can absolutely use these activities.

What I really like about this book is that it is easy to follow and comprehend, the activities mentioned are very doable in the actual classroom. The author uses simple English everyday words. I never had a moment where I had to pause and look for a Dictionary and search the meaning of the words she mentioned in the book. In addition, this manual promotes collaboration and cooperation among learners, which would develop students' social skills and ability to work well with others. It would be easier for them to work in the wider world.

Keeping up students' engagement is important to ensure that they are learning the material they need to succeed in "real life". If we have a 30- minute session or 60-minute session per class, it would be difficult to capture students' attention and make them fully committed in the class. Thus, to keep them engaged, mix up your lessons with interesting activities. It is proven that people learn best by doing and if we provide students with real life activities, it will surely benefit them in the future.

Teaching should never be dull and boring. As an ESL teacher for 4 years now, I must say that there are times that I have stopped being creative in preparing my activities. Because of the tons of paperwork, I have to prepare and submit while teaching at the same time. Sadly, I am guilty of being a mediocre teacher. But when I read this book, it ignited the fire in me. It made me imagine the face-to-face class and how I can incorporate the new learned strategies in my class.



To sum, I would totally recommend this book to teachers and parents. It will make their life much easier. It will spice up their teaching experience. Gone are the days those teachers are the main source of information and students are passive receivers. We are in the 21st century now, as time passes. The way students learn is totally different to the way they learn before. Therefore, the teachers must not teach the way they taught before. We must adapt to change and Teachers should never stop learning.

Bio-Note

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Reference

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