



BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TESOL: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF 100 TESOL ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS ON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This study critically examines Shane Dixon's 100 TESOL Activities for Teachers to assess its contribution to teacher professional development (PD) in multilingual classroom contexts. While the book offers one hundred practical, communicative, and adaptable activities for English language teaching, its theoretical underpinnings and relevance to contemporary multilingual pedagogy have received limited scholarly attention. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach in the form of a critical book review, the analysis is framed by applied linguistics theory, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Findings indicate that the book is a valuable practical resource for fostering interactive, student-centered learning in ESL/EFL contexts. However, it lacks a robust conceptual framework, structured guidance for professional reflection, and explicit strategies for addressing intercultural competence and linguistic diversity in multilingual settings. As such, its effectiveness for PD is maximized when used alongside targeted theoretical instruction and structured teacher training that deliberately integrate theory and practice. This review underscores the importance of critically adapting practitioner resources to ensure they align with the pedagogical demands of 21st-century multilingual education.

Keywords: TESOL, Teacher Professional Development, Multilingual Classrooms, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Critical Book Review.

INTRODUCTION

In the world of teaching English as a second or foreign language (TESOL), the professional challenges faced by teachers are increasingly complex, especially in the context of multilingual classrooms that reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners. The learning environment is no longer homogeneous; Teachers must be able to respond to the dynamics of globalization, mobility between countries, and pedagogical expectations that continue to develop. Therefore, the professional development approach of TESOL teachers should include a balance between applied linguistic theory and pedagogical practice that is relevant to the real situation in the classroom. The literature on teacher professional development highlights the importance of reflective practice, classroom-based inquiry, and an in-depth understanding of second language acquisition (SLA) as the basis for effective teaching (T. S. Farrell, 2016). Study - S. C. Farrell & Kennedy (2019) found that the use of systematic reflection models such as Gibbs' Model significantly assisted ESL teachers in writing more critical and constructive reflections over the course of eight weeks, improving professional awareness and planning for subsequent actions. Meanwhile, research Karim et al. (2024) In the context of community practice, it is shown that collective reflection through group discussions facilitates the development of teachers'

understanding of evidence-based pedagogical practices. In addition, the study Sumartini (2018) in TESOL in Context emphasizes that structured and sustainable professional reflection is a prerequisite for the growth of the professionalism of language teachers. However, the success of teacher training does not only depend on the theoretical framework, but also on the extent to which teachers are equipped with applicative, communicative, and contextual learning activities. In this regard, Shane Dixon's book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* is relevant to be critically reviewed as a practical resource that can bring teachers closer to communicative and participatory classroom practices, even if it requires additional reflective and theoretical enrichment.

This book presents a variety of ESL/EFL activities developed based on a communicative approach (Communicative Language Teaching) and aims to make language learning more lively, interactive, and based on students' needs. Dixon organized the book into a variety of key skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, as well as additional categories such as icebreakers, vocabulary, lesson planning, and evaluation. This book is explicitly not intended as a research-based pedagogical handbook, but rather as a collection of common practices in the TESOL classroom that have been widely used.

However, there is an important critical question to answer: to what extent does this book, while practical and popular, really contribute to the professional development of teachers in the face of real multilingual classroom challenges? Are the activities offered directly related to the principles of differentiated teaching, task-based approaches, or intercultural competencies that are urgently needed in teaching in a multilingual environment? Is this book enough to bridge the gap between theory and practice, or is it just a practical toolkit that needs to be accompanied by a stronger conceptual framework?

Furthermore, the professional development of TESOL teachers is currently increasingly directed towards improving pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and the ability to adapt contextual responsiveness. Good learning activities should be able to accommodate the needs of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, as well as support the development of 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Thus, a critical review of Dixon's book is important to understand whether it can serve as an effective professional resource or whether it requires a theoretical expansion to be more contributive within the framework of contemporary TESOL teacher training.

Thus, this study aims to critically review the book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* from the perspective of its contribution to the professional development of TESOL teachers, especially in the context of multilingual classrooms. This study will consider the relationship between the activities in the book and the main theories of SLA, communicative learning principles, and pedagogical needs in multilingual contexts.

Therefore, the research question that is the focus of this critical review is to what extent does the book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* contribute to the professional development of TESOL teachers in the context of multilingual classrooms through activities that bridge second language acquisition theory and communicative teaching practices in the classroom?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach in the form of a critical book review to examine the contribution of Shane Dixon's book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* to the professional development of TESOL teachers in the context of multilingual classrooms. This approach was chosen because it aims to evaluate the content of the book in depth, not only from a descriptive perspective, but also from a theoretical and practical perspective, especially in terms of the extent to which the activities offered are able to bridge the theory and practice of language teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse environments.

The design of this study refers to the critical content analysis method, which involves a thorough reading of the content of the book, grouping activities based on language skills and pedagogical objectives, and analysis of the suitability of the content with the main theories in

TESOL and applied linguistics. The analysis process is carried out through three main stages: first, identification and categorization of content based on skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and activity types (icebreakers, vocabulary, lesson planning, and so on); second, theoretical analysis that compares the content of books with teaching principles based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory; and third, evaluation of contributions to teachers' professional development through indicators such as method flexibility, theoretical relevance, and sensitivity of multilingual contexts.

The main source of this research is the book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* (Dixon, 2016), which is thoroughly analyzed as a single document. To strengthen the analysis and theoretical validity, the study also referred to a variety of relevant secondary literature, such as Farrel (2015) about the professional development of teachers, Rod (2003) and Spada & Lightbown (2022) about SLAs, and Freeman & Johnson (1998) Regarding the sociocultural perspective in language teacher training. The evaluation criteria used in the analysis consisted of five main dimensions, namely: theoretical relevance, flexibility and adaptability of activities, integration of skills, reflective and collaborative potential, and responsiveness to multilingual and intercultural contexts.

Data analysis is carried out thematically and interpretively with the stages of reading and marking important parts in the book, grouping findings based on pedagogical categories, relating the content to theories in the literature, and compiling a critical evaluative narrative. The validity of the results is maintained through the theoretical triangulation technique, which is comparing the content of the book with several theoretical models in TESOL to avoid interpretation bias. In addition, the generalization of results is not directed at a broad population, but rather based on analytic generalization, in which findings from a single case are used to extrapolate conceptually relevant theoretical principles. Thus, this method is expected to be able to produce a deep and meaningful understanding of the pedagogical value of the book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* as a source of professional development for teachers in teaching English in multilingual classrooms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is a synopsis of the books reviewed in this study, namely: *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers: Practical ESL/EFL Activities for the Communicative Classroom* by Shane Dixon (2016).

Book Synopsis

The book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* was compiled as a practical guide for teachers of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), with a primary focus on the application of a communicative approach in language teaching. This book is designed to complement and enrich classroom teaching practices, both for beginners and experienced teachers, by providing a variety of activities that can be directly applied and adapted to the learning context.

The content of this book is divided into several sections based on the main skills in language learning: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. In addition, there are additional categories such as icebreakers, vocabulary development, lesson planning, and assessment and feedback strategies. Each of the activities in this book is structured in a consistent format, including the name of the activity, the purpose, the duration of the time, the ideal number of learners, the implementation steps, and additional notes for adaptation.

The main goal of this book is to help teachers create a dynamic, interactive, and student-centered learning atmosphere. Many of the activities in this book encourage collaboration between students, emotional engagement, and the development of confidence in using the target language. Dixon also emphasized the importance of flexibility in teaching, these activities can be tailored to the student's ability level, class size, or available resources. Although this book is not explicitly based on academic research, it is based on practices that have been proven effective in various teaching contexts around the world.

This book does not only present mechanistic exercises, but rather meaningful activities rooted in the principles of communicative language teaching. Many of his activities utilize elements of games, problem solving, debate, discussion, creative writing, and the use of technology and simple media to support language skills.

With a practical and flexible approach, this book is a source of inspiration for teachers to design an engaging and productive learning experience. He emphasized that effective teaching does not have to rely on advanced technology or complex theory, but can start from simple activities designed with clear pedagogical goals and tailored to the needs of students.

An analysis of Shane Dixon's book *100 TESOL Activities for Teachers* shows that this book is designed as a practical aid that is very applicable for English teachers, especially in the context of ESL/EFL learning. Through a systematic structure and consistent presentation format, Dixon offers 100 teaching activities that can be applied directly in the classroom with a high degree of modification. These activities are categorized based on the main language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), as well as learning support elements such as vocabulary, icebreakers, assessment, and lesson planning. This approach reflects a strong practical orientation, with an emphasis on the teacher's empirical experience in managing the teaching and learning process in a communicative and enjoyable manner.

In terms of its relationship with language teaching theory, most of the activities offered refer implicitly to the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). For example, activities such as "Two Truths and a Lie", "Describe and Draw", or "Speed Chatting" encourage students to use language meaningfully in a real context, with an emphasis on fluent communication, rather than just grammatical accuracy. This is in line with a communicative approach that places the use of language in a social context as the primary goal of learning (Richards, 2006). In addition, some activities also reflect the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), such as "Problem-Solution Presentations" or "Process Writing", which require students to complete authentic tasks through the use of the target language.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of the professional development of TESOL teachers, this book is more appropriately positioned as a practical toolkit than as an in-depth reflective or conceptual tool. It does not include an explicit theoretical explanation of the pedagogical basis of each activity, so teachers who use it need to have prior knowledge of language learning theory to optimize its implementation. In the context of teacher training, this indicates the need to mentor or combine this book with theory-based training, so that the activities carried out are not mechanistic, but directed and integrated with broader learning objectives.

In the context of multilingual classrooms, this book has enormous potential to support inclusive teaching strategies. Many activities are open, adaptive, and can be modified according to the student's linguistic background. For example, activities such as "Cultural Exchange Presentations" or "Personal Timelines" provide a space for students to express their identities and experiences in English, which at the same time reinforces the affective and intercultural aspects of learning. This is especially important in learning in multilingual environments, where sensitivity to cultural differences and language backgrounds largely determines the effectiveness of teaching (Busse, 2015). However, although many activities implicitly support inclusion and interculturality, the book has not explicitly raised multilingual issues as a framework for activity design. There is no introduction or explanation that discusses the linguistic diversity of students, even though this is one of the main issues in the current global context.

Furthermore, in terms of reflective potential and contribution to teacher professionalism, this book does provide an exploratory space, but it does not provide an explicit reflective framework for teachers. Dixon does not include post-activity reflection guides, reflection-provoking questions, or self-assessment strategies that can help teachers evaluate the impact of the activities they are implementing. In fact, one of the principles in the professional development of language teachers is the ability to carry out reflective teaching (Farrel, 2015). Therefore, in order to make this book more optimal as a professional development tool, teachers are encouraged to supplement it with reflective journals, community of practice discussions, or integration into case study-based training schemes.

From the aspect of flexibility and adaptability, this book displays striking advantages. Most of the activities can be used at different levels (children, teens, adults), and at different levels of language proficiency. Dixon emphatically said that not all activities are suitable for all classes, and he advises teachers to modify them as needed. It demonstrates the author's understanding of the highly varied realities of the classroom, which is the book's main strength in the ever-changing context of global education.

On the other hand, the integration of skills is also seen from several activities that combine more than one skill. For example, in activities such as "Interview and Report", students must speak, listen, record information, and write reports, demonstrating an integrative approach to language competency development. This kind of approach is particularly relevant to the principles of holistic learning in TESOL, which encourage the use of language in real-world situations that combine receptive and productive skills simultaneously (Newton & Nation, 2021).

Overall, the results of the analysis show that the book 100 TESOL Activities for Teachers makes an important contribution in supporting communicative, creative, and student-centered language teaching. However, in the context of the professional development of TESOL teachers, especially in a multilingual environment, this book needs to be used critically and equipped with a theoretical and reflective framework so that its impact not only stops at classroom activities, but also strengthens teachers' pedagogical competence on an ongoing basis.

CONCLUSION

Based on a critical analysis of the contents of Shane Dixon's book 100 TESOL Activities for Teachers, it can be concluded that this book makes a significant contribution as a practical resource in supporting communicative and interactive English learning. This book succeeds in providing a variety of teaching activities that are flexible, easy to apply, and relevant to the needs of 21st century learning. The activities offered facilitate language skills integratively and can be adapted to different skill levels of students, making them very useful in the daily practice of ESL/EFL teachers.

However, from the perspective of the professional development of TESOL teachers, especially in the context of multilingual classrooms, this book still has a number of limitations. Although it implicitly reflects the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), this book has not explicitly linked its activities to the established theoretical frameworks in applied linguistics or Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In addition, this book has not provided a systematic reflective space to support the conceptual and sustainable development of teachers' pedagogical competence, as recommended by the literature in the field of reflective teaching.

In the context of multilingual classrooms that demand sensitivity to linguistic and cultural diversity, this book also does not explicitly discuss differentiation, interculturality, or contextual responsiveness learning strategies. Although many activities are inclusive and can be modified, the linguistic diversity of students has not been a major consideration in the design of these activities. Therefore, this book needs to be used critically, and ideally it should be complemented by additional training that integrates SLA theory, intercultural pedagogy, as well as a framework of professional reflection.

Thus, 100 TESOL Activities for Teachers is a very useful resource for bridging theory and practice in language teaching, but its effectiveness as a tool for teachers' professional development depends on the teacher's conceptual understanding, assistance in training, and the context of its application. This book will have a maximum impact if used not only as a list of activities, but as a trigger for continuous pedagogical exploration, reflection, and adaptation in facing the challenges of multilingual classes professionally and based on theory.

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