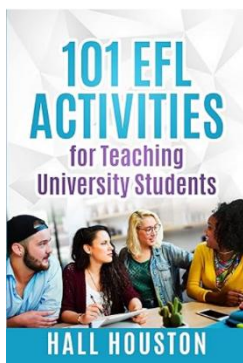


Book Review



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Corresponding Author:

Cecilia Yin Mei Cheong ceciliac@um.edu.my

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1674-5763>

Book Review: 101 EFL Activities for Teaching University Students

Cecilia Yin Mei Cheong
Faculty of Languages and Linguistics
Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

BOOK DETAILS

101 EFL Activities for Teaching University Students

Hall Houston (2022)

Japan: iTDi TESOL

Pp. 135

ISBN 9798419082793

¥2,383 (Paperback) ¥1,239 (Digital)

Hall Houston's *101 EFL Activities for Teaching University Students* is a compilation of activities from the author's more than 20 years of experience teaching EFL. The book offers a wealth of ideas for language educators seeking to invigorate their English language classrooms. It presents an extensive collection of 101 activities designed to engage and inspire university students in learning English. The book propounds a variety of practical, creative and engaging activities for the language classroom. The stimulating nature of the activities, with challenging and engaging content, makes them particularly well-suited for the university context. While the book may be tailored for university students, many of the activities can be adapted for use with other age groups and different language proficiency levels.

However, the book does not specifically cater to the unique characteristics and preferences of Gen Z learners. The activities in the book could benefit from suggestions for integrating digital tools, such as online collaboration platforms or interactive language applications. Teachers may need to incorporate technology, multimedia resources and gamified activities in their lessons to satisfy the learning styles of the digital natives.

Content and Structure

There are three main themes that underpin the activities in the book, (1) context of the university environment, which addresses the setting of the university campus; (2) group dynamics, which focuses on the formation and qualities of an ideal group, and the stages that groups pass through; and (3) active learning, to enable students to be more engaged in class.

The book is thoughtfully organised into three chapters focusing on different aspects of language learning: speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, integrated skills, and warm-up activities. The first chapter on ‘Getting Off To A Good Start’ contains a collection of 38 activities that are grouped into five sections for learning names, learning about the teacher, learning about classmates, familiarising with the university campus, and understanding the course and syllabus. The second chapter on ‘Maintaining Motivation and Interest’ offers an assortment of 38 activities in seven sections focusing on listening and reading skills, music and song activities, video activities, activities with an element of surprise, talking about being a university student, as well as reviewing and getting feedback on the course. The third chapter on ‘Ending The Semester Gracefully’ comprises 25 activities featuring review activities, reflection on the course and semester, and talking about the future, before activities on ending the semester in a positive way. Each chapter also comes with Teacher Development Tips. These tips are exercises designed to help teachers reflect on their development and intended to provide insights into improving their teaching skills.

Practicality and Flexibility

The suggested activities are practical as they require minimal preparation and are designed to be flexible, allowing teachers to modify the activities to fit their lesson plans seamlessly. The warm-up activities are especially useful for setting a positive tone at the beginning of the class and can be easily adapted to suit the lessons’ focus. The activities encourage interaction, promote authentic use of language, and foster a supportive learning environment. By engaging students in meaningful tasks, the activities will help develop not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking, problem-solving and collaborative skills.

The speaking activities range from structured debates and role-plays to more spontaneous discussion prompts, aimed at fostering communicative competence and confidence in students, encouraging them to practice practical language skills in scenarios they might encounter outside the classroom, thus bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. However, the activities may lack the cultural specificity that might make them especially impactful in certain regions. Teachers in some parts of Southeast Asia, where students may be hesitant to speak up, might find it helpful if the book provided strategies for encouraging shy or reluctant students. Similarly, activities that incorporate culturally relevant topics could enhance student engagement in specific regions, where students might feel more comfortable discussing familiar themes.

The inclusion of activities that integrate multiple language skills in all the activities is a commendable aspect of the book. These activities encourage students to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a cohesive manner, promoting a more holistic approach to language teaching and learning. For example, the “Jigsaw Reading” activity combines reading

comprehension with collaborative discussion, enhancing both reading skills and peer interaction; while “Halfalogue” and “Expanding the Transcript” activities address all four language skills.

Highlights

One of the significant features of this book is its concise but clear activity descriptions. Each activity is presented with a detailed explanation of the objectives, materials required, suggested duration for each activity, preparation steps and procedure, thus allowing language teachers to easily adopt the relevant activities to complement their lesson plans and address the specific language needs of their students. Houston also includes variations and tips for adapting the activities to suit different classroom dynamics, ensuring that teachers can easily implement them to accommodate varying levels of language proficiency.

Conclusion

Overall, *101 EFL Activities for Teaching University Students* is a valuable addition to the professional library of any English language teacher. Houston has created a resource that is not only rich in variety but also practical and adaptable. By combining creativity, practicality, and pedagogical soundness, this book empowers teachers to create dynamic and engaging lessons that inspire and motivate their students.

Houston's approachable writing style makes the book an enjoyable and comprehensible read. Additionally, the book comes with worksheets and a list of recommended readings and downloadable web resources (at <https://www.itdi.pro/>) which teachers may employ in their language classes.

In a rapidly evolving educational landscape, where the demand for effective and innovative teaching methods is ever-growing, Houston's book is a reliable and inspiring resource which incorporates the use of newer media in some of the suggested activities to keep today's students motivated and interested in their language lessons. Whether you are a seasoned educator or new to the field, this book will undoubtedly enhance your teaching repertoire and improve students' language learning experience.