PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES AND METAPHORS:
A Review of ACT English Language Books

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INTRODUCTION

The six psychological flexibility processes can be divided into the three pillars of psychological flexibility: openness (acceptance and defusion), awareness (present moment and self-as-context) and engagement (values and committed action) (e.g., Hayes et al., 2012; Strosahl et al., 2012; Luoma et al., 2017). In this study, the purpose is offering a comprehensive overview of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy psychological flexibility processes on ACT books (1999-2018) with the aim of outlining a comprehensible and user-friendly profile of the use of metaphors, exercises, and worksheets within them.

METHOD

Books analyzed were 25 and were chosen on the basis of an availability criteria. In order to realize the profile, books were divided into two main groups: (1) ACT Books for professionals and (2) ACT Books for clients.

After a preliminary reading of the books, researchers examined all experiential contents provided and tried to derive meaningful and workable categories. The researchers found close agreement on these general overarching categories: metaphors; exercises; worksheets; key questions. Each category was encoded and represented by a graphic symbol. Researchers also highlight the ways in which the content was presented: full script; instruction list; clinical dialogue; concise description; quote. In addition researchers reported the occurrence of a mindfulness practice. All these elements together with the corresponding graphic symbols are summarized in the table below. Original titles and page references have also been reported for each content.

Encoding work was divided in different phases: 1) an encoding process; 2) a reviewing process; 3) an approval process.

GRAPHIC SYMBOL SUMMARY

	METAPHORS
	EXERCISES
	WORKSHEET
	KEY QUESTIONS
	MINDFULNESS

S	SCRIPT
I	INSTRUCTIONS (instruction list, procedures)
D	DIALOGUE (clinical vignettes, dialogue transcripts)
C	CONCISE DESCRIPTION (summary)
Q	QUOTE

RESULTS

The tables below show the quantity of contents according to their presence on books.

ACCEPTANCE CONTENTS PRESENT IN		
1 BOOK	2 BOOKS	3 OR MORE BOOKS
113	19	38

DEFUSION CONTENTS PRESENT IN		
1 BOOK	2 BOOKS	3 OR MORE BOOKS
88	23	33

PRESENT MOMENT CONTENTS PRESENT IN		
1 BOOK	2 BOOKS	3 OR MORE BOOKS
41	3	16

SELF-AS-CONTEXT CONTENTS PRESENT IN		
1 BOOK	2 BOOKS	3 OR MORE BOOKS
20	9	6

VALUES CONTENTS PRESENT IN		
1 BOOK	2 BOOKS	3 OR MORE BOOKS
146	9	22

COMMITTED ACTION CONTENTS PRESENT IN		
1 BOOK	2 BOOKS	3 OR MORE BOOKS
93	13	17

The following easy-to-read summary tables provide an essential overview of psychological flexibility processes metaphors, exercises and worksheets. This review was conducted with the aim of offering a universally accessible, clear and intuitive cataloging tool of practical and experiential resources for ACT learners and practitioners. Furthermore, the summary tables provide a brief description of how every metaphor, exercise or worksheet is presented and a reference to page numbers and external resources.

DISCUSSION

The data reported in this poster are a conclusive collection of the data of previous works carried out on each single process. Three different posters have been realized on the occasion of the two past ACBS World Conferences related to the three pillars of psychological flexibility: openness (Rossi, Del Brutto, Ginex, Mancini, 2019), awareness (Rossi, Lioce, Martorella, Di Biase, Mancini, 2020) and engagement (Rossi, Lioce, Glauser, Mancini, 2019). The final summary tables take into account the ten most recurrent contents with respect to each psychological flexibility process.

This study offers a preliminary overview. Further researches on a larger sample of books are needed with more extensive and universal methods of encoding and checking.

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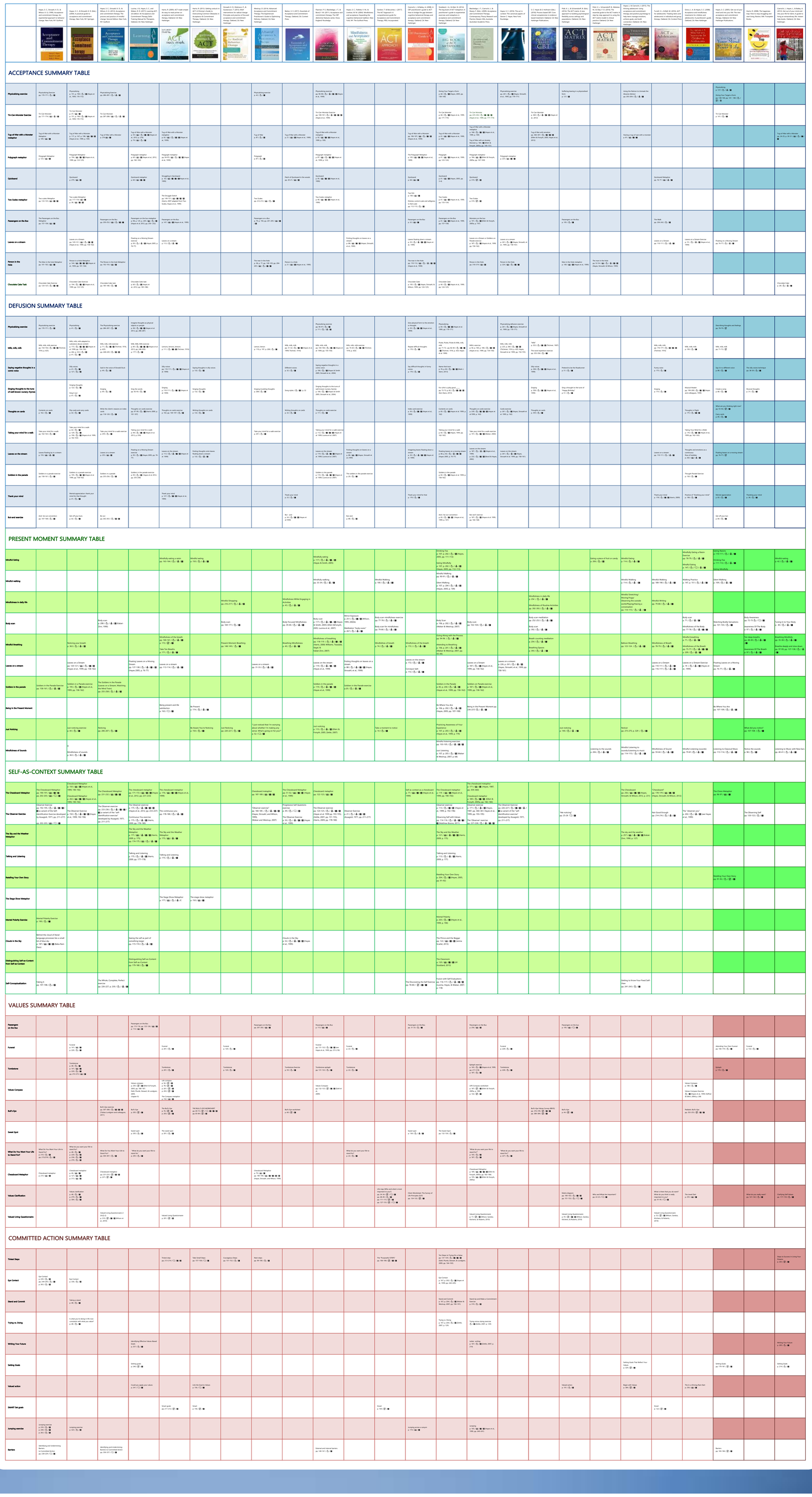
SUMMARY TABLES