

Courses for University of Cambridge teaching qualifications

CELTA – WHAT IS IT?

CELTA (Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) is the most widely recognized international professional qualification for English language teachers.

Owing to the grant from European programme SOCRATES (LINGUA B) I was given the opportunity to do the CELTA course at Shane school in London. Now I would like to share my opinion and ideas with colleagues.

Candidates for CELTA are usually university graduates or qualified teachers. They must have a minimum standard of education that would allow entry to higher education in their country. You need not have English as your first language provided that your awareness and competence in written and spoken English enables you to follow the course without hindrance.

CELTA is four-week course. It requires a full-time commitment. Lectures, workshops and observation of experienced teachers take up roughly half the contact time. Teaching practice takes up the other half and is conducted in small groups (5-6 teachers) with a teaching supervisor. You teach for a total of 6 hours (60 minutes each) with graded classes of students who are learning English – usually a group of students at elementary level and a group of students at intermediate level.

Teaching practice includes guided preparation of the lesson to be taught, classroom practice and observation of peers, followed by analysis, reflection and feedback.

Completion of lesson planning, the four set written assignments and the portfolio of coursework take place outside course contact time.

Teachers have individual and group tutorials. I found very useful the group tutorials, which were held to monitor and discuss the progress of every teacher.

As far as the course content is concerned it includes:

- Language awareness: how English works, basic concepts and terms used to describe form and meaning in language; language use, language skills, and syllabus design. Everyone should get a copy of Learning Teaching by Jim Scrivener and read it before the course begins. Much of the methodological content of the course is reflected in the book
- Learning and teaching: educational backgrounds and traditions of learners, motivation and different learning styles. One of the topics for written assignments is to prepare a profile of a learner of English. It includes comparison between English and Portuguese, for example, and finding the most difficult sounds for the learner, differences in Grammar, similarities and

misinterpretations of word order and vocabulary, false friends and areas of particular lexical confusion. Everyone likes this practice because it is very informal and is done while you are drinking a cup of tea or coffee with a student from your class.

- The principles and practical realities of planning for effective teaching: selecting and adapting materials for learning activities and tasks. Teachers find useful this part of the course because they learn some new techniques of planning and adapting.
- Classroom management is developed: teaching skills are paid special attention: Classroom control, monitoring and evaluation are estimated ;
- Teachers are given opportunities to select, use and evaluate commercial and non-published resources.

Assessment

There is no final written examination, assessment is based on candidates' performance throughout the course in the following three components: teaching practice, written assignments and professional development. Candidates whose performance meet the specified criteria are awarded a Pass. Those who demonstrate a significantly higher level of achievement in their classroom teaching skills may be awarded a Pass (Grade B). And those who in addition to this demonstrate a significantly higher level of achievement in relation to their lesson planning and awareness of teaching and learning processes may be awarded a Pass (Grade A). All participants receive a detailed personal teaching profile.

CELTA course is teacher's challenge: first, it gives the opportunity for self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses; second, it gives the chance to work as teacher, colleague and employee.

Doing this course in the UK you enjoy teaching and communicating with colleagues and students from different parts of the world.

Nataliya YORDANOVA

Teacher of English

164th Spanish Language School "Miguel de Cervantes"

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