

CELTA Assignment 4-Lessons from the Classroom

1. Before the course

A month is a very short time to learn something, but I really learnt a lot from this course. At beginning of this course, I thought it was enjoyable, because I was learning new teaching techniques. My major in university was English education. The education system in XXXXXX is totally different from Western countries. During CELTA, I learnt a good way to teach learners in a student centered way. During this course, I have learned a lot from the critiques and feedback of my classmates and tutors, the observation of peers and experienced teachers, and from self-reflection. When I had my class before, I seldom thought about self-reflection or gave some feedback after I observed other's classes. I think this part useful to help each other to improve our teaching. On that note here are my strengths

2. Strengths

2.1 Classroom management

Though my tutor commented on March 5th, the first day of TP, that I established good classroom management with the students, I really feel that I felt more comfortable from the second lesson onwards. I think I did well at class management from the beginning. I made sure I kept all the students working hard. The first week, when my tutor commented that I managed my classes well, since then, I think my class management skills have only improved.

2.2 Phonology

During my third TP (teaching practice) I focused on helping students improve their pronunciation. My tutor almost gave me an above standard rating for that class, He said my class was good but there were some language errors. I agreed that it was my weak point and that. I should pay much more attention to it.

My tutor suggested that I could script difficult words phonemically using the dictionary at planning stages and check these with a peer before class. I thought it was a good suggestion. Observing Maria do a phonemic tic tac toe of key words from an impending listening was very useful as it showed me how a warmer can be intrinsic to the lesson content and not just a time filler.

3. Weaknesses

3.1 Teacher talking time

I had a problem with excessive TTT from the very beginning. I think a major reason for this is that the XXXXXX educational system tends to have very teacher-centered classrooms. My tutors and classmates have pointed out that I make the lessons more student-centered. I earnestly believe that student-centered learning is far more effective. After each class, I asked the learners what they thought about the lesson, they told me they felt more confident to practice speaking in our lesson.

In observation of May, I noticed that she had put her plan on the board with magnets. This meant that she could return to check that she was on track whilst monitoring and moving around and didn't panic like me when I couldn't find my own plan and started to talk too much as a result. Having a contingency plan to avoid teacher talk...prompts around the room to remind her to 'stop talking', 'ask X to tell Y', also seemed to help her reduce the quantity of her talk.

3.2 Lesson Planning

I had a terrible problem with my lesson planning. I always mixed up stage skills and language. My tutor helped to clarify the difference. Though I am doing better than before, I still have a long way to go.

Observing Liam do his present perfect continuous lesson was very useful. He showed us his plan and all his teacher talk had been clearly scripted and pruned to a minimum. He had also clearly plotted open ended questions, not just one word or Y/N questions, for students to respond to. The CCQS and semi-completed substitution table on a single handout was also very effective in reducing his teacher talk. It just proved that with clearly focused planning and a procedure which ensures that the learners are encouraged to discuss and share helps teachers achieve aims. I will certainly use Liam's idea of using a different font for my scripted language in future!

4. Post-CELTA action plan

My goals for the future are to make my lessons more student centered, to reduce TTT and to improve my language. These have been my most significant weaknesses throughout the course. I will work hard on my weakness. My purpose for studying CELTA is to improve my teaching skills. I think I know how the only thing left is to practice what I've learned with real class. I also take time for self-reflection about my classes. Finally, if I have opportunity I hope I could go overseas to teach English.

In order to address these issues over the coming months and develop professionally I have the following action plan in mind:

4.1 Teacher talking time

1. Record myself on my smart phone and take a dictation of random single minute bursts of TTT. Prune these down to convey only essential messages.
2. Script my language on my plan in a different font
3. Ask a colleague to observe me and feedback on this issue at least three or four times over the coming months
4. Have a word limit of 100 words per lesson for teacher talk and donate £10 to charity if I exceed the 100 words☺

4.2 Lesson Planning

1. At least once a week attempt to use a plan from an online teaching site and write a log on how it went in practice
2. Keep all my lesson plans and rewrite at least one a week to improve on it for implementation in a future lesson
3. Swap plans with peers and colleagues via email
4. Observe a more experienced colleague teach at least three or four times over the year and try to plan the lessons taught post observation and check this with the original plans at a later date.

987 words total