## To be completed by CELTA candidate

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This assignment is my original work and I have acknowledged all sources.

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### To be completed by CELTA tutor

Overall grade: Pass

General comments: Thank you for you work, Steven. You have discussed your strengths and action points very well, with clear description and links to TP work overall. Your action plan is very well staged, focused and relevant. Consider joining an international organization like IATEFL to keep updated with the world of ELT.

All the best with your future teaching and hope to see you on Delta!

Orlando Delgado

# Lessons from the Classroom

## Teaching Strengths

I enjoy language and learning about it, and during the course I came to enjoy **language analysis**. I looked forward to researching lexis and grammar in advance of a lesson; thoroughly analyzing the meaning, form, pronunciation, and appropriacy of the target language; and teaching it systematically. I came to appreciate phonology and I’m now reasonably comfortable with the phonetic chart. During teaching practices, this resulted in me being ready with good answers for questions that came up, and I think this strength will help me continue to develop as a language teacher. Examples of where this helped included during TP3 when a student asked for more details about why present simple tense doesn’t just cover the present, and in TP7 when students used alternate lexical phrases and word orders that I had not taught but that I’d already researched and analyzed. I therefore had clear responses ready.

**Lesson planning** was another area of strength and one where I improved throughout the course. Thanks to ongoing feedback from tutors, over time my plans became increasingly detailed. From TP6 onward, I was scripting not only CCQs and ICQs but also instructions, demos, transitions, and questions used for elicitation. This helped me increase student-centered teaching, reduce TTT, and provide clearer, more concise, and less sequenced instructions. Additionally, the improvements to my lesson plans over time helped me systematically cover MFPA in distinct sub-stages, and better scaffold tasks (e.g., for student writing during TP8). And finally, I got positive feedback on multiple occasions about having selected/designed appropriate tasks and having effectively adapted coursebook materials for my lessons. My new skills for creating well-structured lesson plans will continue to help me as a teacher.

I’ve done my best to build good **rapport with students**. I used the students’ names on every occasion, responded to all their questions in supportive ways, regularly complimented them on good work, and tried to take their interests into account when teaching. I was glad to see this reflected in comments from my tutor in TP6 and TP8 feedback as me having “excellent rapport with students”. Hopefully this led to higher comfort and motivation from students.

## Areas for Improvement

A consistent area for improvement was to **make my teaching more student centered and reduce teacher talking time**, thereby making my teaching more communicative and hopefully more engaging and memorable. Although I got better at this over time and often received compliments on doing it effectively, there’s room to be more consistent.

Another challenge was **giving consistently clear and concise instructions**, especially with elementary level students. I had a tendency to sometimes speak too fast, use too many words, or repeat myself. What was most effective in addressing this was to script much more of my speech in lesson plans, including instructions, demos, CCQs, and ICQs.

**Time management** is another area I’ll need to continue improving. Right off the bat, I went about 4 minutes overtime during TP1, and therefore I made this a focus in every subsequent TP. Although I never again meaningfully exceeded my time for the overall lesson, during some lesson stages (e.g., when teaching pronunciation or meaning) I took longer than I’d planned, which led to abbreviating other important parts of the lessons such as peer checking or delayed error correction. By the end of the course, I’d built up strategies for better dealing with this, including noting particular items in my lesson plans that I could skip if I was running long.

## Observations

Observing tutors and online videos were both very helpful toward learning effective teaching practices and how to use digital tools in a classroom setting. I picked up specific ideas from online videos that helped me more effectively use Zoom whiteboards and breakout rooms. Tutors showed effective use of Google Jamboards and forms for student tasks. Ricardo’s recorded grammar lesson was particularly instructive, and I was impressed by how effectively he tied every stage together around the target language and central context, and systematically covered all stages in perfect time.

In observation of my fellow classmate Mike, I noticed both positive and negative methods of teaching. I liked his relaxed approach and how he always tried to make his lessons fun. More often than not, this paid off with strong engagement from students. In TP7, I liked how he matched breakout room numbers to slide numbers to have students work together on collaborative tasks, despite not knowing in advance how many or which students would be present. On the negative side, he was sometimes less organized, systematic, and prepared during his lessons, which pushed me to focus more on these areas to avoid the same mistakes.

## Further Development

There are three primary areas I plan to focus on for further development of my teaching skills in the short to mid term.

First, I plan to spend more time observing experienced and effective teachers. I’ll watch all of the lessons provided by IH Mexico and seek out more on the internet and in classrooms.

Secondly, I think going through the process of learning a language myself will be among the most helpful things I can do to build empathy for students and identify effective teaching and learning techniques. Therefore I plan to continue my studies of Japanese and Serbian.

Lastly, there are several books I’m planning to read to continue developing as a teacher, starting with the following:

*Learner English*, 2nd Edition by Michael Swan and Bernard Smith looks like an exceptionally detailed and interesting book on how I can adapt my teaching and focus areas for students with different nationalities and mother tongues.

For methodologies, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 5th Edition by Jeremy Harmer covers techniques and procedures in Chapter 4 (*Popular methodology*). I expect it will help me build on the skills and knowledge I’ve gained during the CELTA course.

## Bibliography

* J. Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 5th Edition, Pearson, 2015
* M. Swan & B. Smith, *Learner English*, 2nd Edition, CUP, 2001