

Significance of CELTA in Teaching Field

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Abstract

The Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) is one of the most prominent and internationally recognized diplomas in the field of English language teaching. Despite its global reputation, there is a paucity of research exploring its impact and importance in the academic field, internationally and locally. This study aims to investigate the significance of CELTA certification for educators, particularly in the Sultanate of Oman. A questionnaire was distributed to (15) CELTA-certified teachers in the Al- Dhahirah Region, including individuals teaching at the Preparatory Studies Center- University of Technology and Applied Sciences- the Sultanate of Oman- full-time and part-time- with varying levels of experience. The findings revealed that CELTA certification equips teachers with modern teaching methodologies, enhances their instructional skills, and positively impacts students' motivation and success. This article discusses these results in detail, highlighting the benefits of CELTA for teachers' improvement, betterment of students' performance, and provides recommendations for educators and institutions.

Keywords: CELTA, international teaching standards, language education, professional development teacher training, teaching methodology

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Introduction

Individuals without any prior teaching experience can obtain a CELTA diploma within a month. This credential has become a significant priority in the field of teaching. Despite its importance, there is a paucity of research and studies focusing on CELTA programs in non-English-speaking countries globally. Given that English is a foreign language in the Arab World, particularly in the Sultanate of Oman, it has become essential to highlight this issue and examine all factors that might impact obtaining this diploma. It is important to consider that English serves as a lingua franca in the country and is the primary language of instruction in English classes.

In past decades, the CELTA certification was predominantly associated with native English speakers. However, over time, significant efforts have been made to internationalize this qualification. Due to the emphasis on maintaining high standards in English language proficiency and teacher training programs, there has been a crucial need to develop new methods, techniques, and training courses to enhance the quality of teachers within the local

community. The present study aims to explore the significance of obtaining a CELTA diploma for academics, including schoolteachers and college/university lecturers.

Statement of Problem

This study highlights the significance of obtaining CELTA certificate to academics for their improvement and promotion in teaching. In other words, the current study is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is the CELTA essential in creating and cultivating successful teachers to excel in their career?
2. What effect does CELTA have on both teachers and students?
3. What are the distinguishing qualifications between teachers who possess a CELTA certification and those who do not?

Objectives of Study

This paper aims:

1. To investigate the importance of the CELTA diploma to academics.
2. To explore the benefits of CELTA for both teachers and students.
3. To compare the qualifications of teachers who have CELTA with those who do not.

Literature Review

“The abbreviation CELTA stands for Certificate in English Teaching to Adults. As the name indicates, the CELTA certificate is specifically designed to prepare you to teach English as a foreign language to mature learners” (Osiejewicz, 2019, Para.3). No matter how qualified teachers are, they still need some courses in order to promote their level in following up to date techniques that will be reflected on them, their students, colleagues, etc. Some courses are conducted by colleagues within the same academic institutions and are considered a sort of Professional Development courses, while others take the shape of national, or international tinge. When dealing with CELTA courses, we should remember that this course is internationally recognized and blessed by a prestigious body – Cambridge University. It is conducted in many parts of the world by official centers that, normally, guarantee quick recruitment for successful trainees. “CELTA courses are only offered by centers approved by Cambridge. Cambridge makes sure that all these centers offer standardized courses and that the teachers who complete them are well-prepared for doing their job” (Osiejewicz, 2019, Para.6).

Believing in CELTA as a useful course that enhances trainees’ level in the English language paves the way for participants to excel and be more academically distinguished and might become trainers in the centers where they do CELTA. It just needs more patience and dedication

to be an important well-known figure in training others. “I have also become a CELTA trainer, which in turn has helped me improve on some of my weak points further” (Millin, (n.d), Para.10). Why do people take the CELTA?

There are a number of reasons why people do the CELTA. As an internationally recognized diploma, with a prestigious reputation and recognition, many dedicated people prefer to get it as soon as possible, especially those who are planning to get a teaching job abroad with higher salary, of course. Moreover, one of the other reasons beyond doing the CELTA is that it takes four weeks to obtain.

Why take the CELTA course? The CELTA is one of the most intensive English Language Teacher Training courses there is. So, if you need to put your life on hold for a month to complete the course, why do so many people want to take it? The reason is that it is the most prestigious, most widely recognized TEFL/TESOL course in the whole world, and there are numerous reasons why people want the qualification (StudyCelta, 2017, Para.2).

The reasons why the CELTA course is important for your career and for your overall life are plentiful. Starting from how this certificate is accredited all over the world, to the ability to teach abroad and enjoy a great teaching experience discovering different places and cultures (International House, (n.d), p. 22).

As a matter of fact, all people, university graduates, and fresh teachers are not born with the capabilities to do things perfectly, unless they get some training courses-- locally, nationally, or internationally. The CELTA does provide teachers with a variety of skills and practical knowledge needed for the teaching profession, without which, he/she might get stuck in the classroom. All ambitious teachers are advised to do this important course and see how developed they become in their career.

The very important thing about the CELTA course is that it provides the teacher of English language with the practical experience and knowledge needed to develop his/her own skills as a teacher. Being authorized by Cambridge University is one of the conspicuously attractive reasons that encourage every ambitious teacher to follow the CELTA course (StudyCelta, 2017, p.6).

The following is a story of a person who is eagerly looking to get the CELTA, not for securing a certain job, or for financial reasons, on the contrary, he needs it to know how to perform the job of teaching.

In my case, I didn't just want to do a CELTA to jump through a hoop and get a job, but, really, I wanted a safe place where I could get up and actually try teaching for the first time, while getting some supportive feedback in the process (Duncan, 2019, p. 2).

Do CELTA applicants have to have certain characteristics? Are there specific requirements or qualifications they should have, such as age, proficiency in English language including grammar,

writing, reading, listening skills, etc.? well, the following shows the minimum requirements for doing the CELTA.

In terms of requirements for non-native speakers, applicants for CELTA courses are selected only if they meet specific criteria and requirements:

- They must be at least 18 years old (although 20 and above is considered a preferable option);
- They should be knowledgeable in English language;
- They should know English grammar;
- Their minimum requirements are higher C1 on the Common European Framework e.g. Cambridge CAE grade A’;
- They should have the potential to effectively complete high-level written assignments;
- They must have a standard of education equivalent to that required for entry into higher education (International House, (n.d), p.8).

The CELTA is a comprehensive course with an intensive nature; it could be so challenging not only to fresh teachers, but for the old hands, as well. Its focus includes all language skills that are so challenging and demanding, but with dedication and hard work, candidates make it.

CELTA can be challenging due to its intensive nature. CELTA course content focuses on various TEFL-related knowledge and skillsets, including planning and resources, and teaching language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, professionalism, and language awareness). With dedication and effort, many find success in meeting its rigorous standards (Bentley, 2014, p. 11).

During the four months doing CELTA, all trainees undergo continuous assessment. They should give presentations on the material they take, submit a good amount of written work; assignments, homework, etc. All of this work is done instead of taking final exams. Upon finishing the whole course, trainees – depending on their levels – get one of these pass grades: pass A, B, or C, bearing in mind that the top of which is “A” as it is the highest in this course.

Apart from participating in input sessions, you need to submit a number of written assignments and complete the teaching practice component to obtain your CELTA qualification. There’s no final exam as you’re being assessed throughout the course. There are only three pass grades that you can get: Pass “A”, Pass “B” and Pass (Pass “A” being the highest) (Osiejewicz, 2018, p. 13)

CELTA trainees, in addition to getting training and obtaining a diploma, can get more benefits by joining this course abroad, it is a chance for trainees to discover many tourist spots, culture, mix with local people, attend festivals about so many events in that country. Moreover, they can attend or participate in conferences, seminars, and workshops conducted in the hosting country. All of these activities help trainees explore so many sides of other cultures, and by returning to their homelands, they can convey their experience to their families, colleagues, and the local community.

Also, if you're a history lover, you can go to countries filled with historical places and monuments. In this way, you can learn more about the history and culture of this country while also doing what you love and teaching others the English language (International House, (n.d), p. 13).

CELTA trainees do not have to worry about the material offered to them; it is both – theoretical and practical. They will be in small groups (up to 6 trainees) with two tutors for each course. Students will cover all skills – reading, listening, speaking, and writing. What is worth mentioning is that all tutors are highly qualified, graduates of reputable universities, and professional in teaching CELTA.

The main goal of CELTA training is to develop practical skills through face-to-face practice, but also to enhance confidence and develop the necessary theoretical competence needed to teach English. The maximum ratio of candidates to tutors on CELTA courses amounts to one tutor for every six candidates, and to two tutors on each course. (International House, (n.d), p.4).

No matter how much fees one spends to do CELTA, they are the biggest winners. All the expenses spent are rewarded up on getting a good job, as CELTA diploma enhances the chance to secure rewarding jobs, not only locally, but internationally. The cost differs from one place to another, depending on the nature one takes it – physical or online.

“CELTA certification costs vary by location and institution but generally range from \$1,500 to \$4,000 USD. This depends on the center offering a CELTA course and whether you take the course online or in person” (Bentley, 2014, p.12). “The CELTA certificate literally opens up a world of opportunity for you. If you want to teach English abroad, it will help you get the best jobs around the globe” (Osiejewicz, 2018, p. 15). Doing CELTA is never a loss of money, time, or effort. It is so beneficial for everyone planning for future jobs – teaching, or whatsoever.

Though demanding, teaching is enjoyable. It requires some very smart skills such as good preparation, class management, lesson planning, and more. For fresh teachers, CELTA means a lot. It is not how much material is given by the teacher to their students, but how well it is introduced – quality, not quantity. Techniques in the domain of teaching do play an important role in delivering the class material.

I want to gain a CELTA qualification to improve my teaching skills and to become a better teacher. I have been teaching for over 3 years now, both for language schools and

as a private tutor. Even though I consider myself to be a good teacher, there is still a lot I need to learn, especially when it comes to planning lessons. I am also keen to learn new techniques and to improve my general knowledge of English grammar and teaching methods (StudyCelta, 2017, p.7).

Research Method

To assess the significance of the CELTA certification for the sample population, the authors distributed a questionnaire to 15 CELTA holders in the Al Dhahirah region of Oman. The data collection aimed to capture the authentic academic experiences of participants, who had between 5-10 years of teaching experience. The analyzed data provide an in-depth and accurate analysis of the questionnaire responses from all participants with CELTA experience.

Participants

The participants are all English as a Foreign Language teachers affiliated with the Oman Ministry of Education and the Preparatory Studies Center at University of Technology and Applied Science-Ibri. Their ages range from 28-35. They were informed about the nature of the questionnaire, assured of its voluntary nature, and guaranteed confidentiality. Participants were also encouraged to provide any additional information they deemed relevant to the study.

Instrument

The questionnaire comprises (10) Yes-No items, (5) Agree-Disagree and (5) optional open-ended questions pertaining to the professional domain. Participants are afforded complete freedom to express their opinions whether positive or negative.

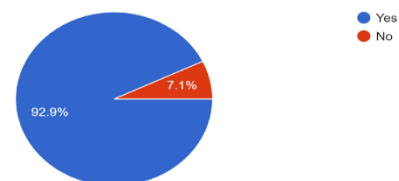
Findings and Discussion

Table1

1.Do you think CELTA offered you the adequate training in teaching English?	Yes	No
	13	1
	92.9%	7.1%

Table 1 shows that

1.Do you think CELTA offered you the adequate training in teaching English?
14 responses

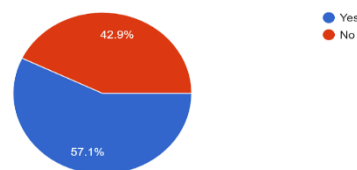


the participants (92.9%) agree that CELTA offered them the adequate training in teaching English.

Table 2

3. Do you think CELTA supplied you with the adequate training in being familiar with different cultures?	Yes 8	No 6
	57.1%	42.9%

3. Do you think CELTA supplied you with the adequate training in being familiar with different cultures?
14 responses



The findings indicate that most participants, about (57.1%), believe that CELTA supplied them with the adequate training in being familiar with different cultures which bridges the gap between teachers and other cultures.

8. Do you think that CELTA balanced teacher-centered and student-centered learning on the course?	Yes 12	No 2
	85.7%	14.3%

8. Do you think that CELTA balanced teacher-centered and student-centered learning on the course?
14 responses

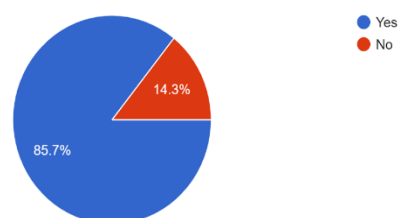


Table 3

The findings indicate that the participants, about (85.7%), believe that CELTA balanced teacher-centered and student-centered learning on the course. It really reflects the roles of both- teachers and students, in the classroom.

Table 4

11. Personally, I recommend doing CELTA.	Agree 13	Disagree 1
	92.9%	7.1%

11. Personally, I recommend doing CELTA.
14 responses

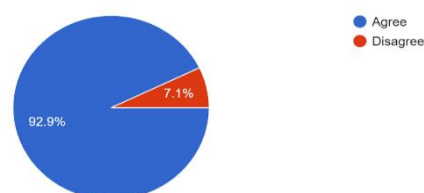


Table 4 shows that the largest group of participants, (92.9%), agree that recommend doing CELTA. It is a high percentage, in fact.

Table 5

14. CELTA increased my power of self-evaluation and become- positively, a unique one?	Agree	Disagree
	14	-
	100%	100%

14. CELTA increased my power of self-evaluation and become- positively, a unique one?
14 responses

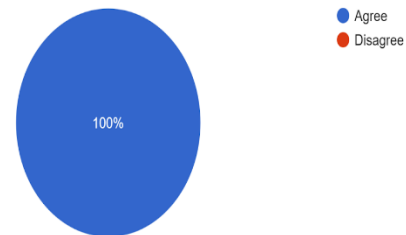


Table 5 shows that all the participants, (100%), agree that CELTA increased their power of self-evaluation and become- positively, a unique one.

Table 6

15. CELTA taught me foreign language testing and evaluation skills.	Agree	Disagree
	12	2
	85.7%	14.3%

15. CELTA taught me foreign language testing and evaluation skills.
14 responses

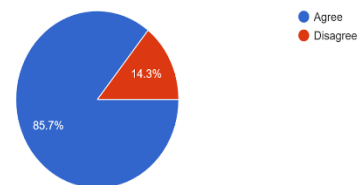


Table 6 shows that the largest group of participants, (85.7%), agreed that CELTA taught teachers foreign language testing and evaluation skills.

Limitations of Study

Despite their best efforts, the authors encountered certain limitations during this study, on top of which was the small sample size. This limitation arose from the limited number of CELTA holders available and willing to participate in the study. Furthermore, with the end of year approaching, participants are under considerable pressure due to tasks such as preparing for final exams,

invigilating, marking and performing office duties. Another limitation is that some participants completed the CELTA qualification over six years ago, resulting in a potential gap between their training and current methodologies and approaches in teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, CELTA is very useful and important to all teachers which gives them the chance to promote their academic levels on the one hand and face any challenge that they might face in their career, on the other hand. It provides a valuable opportunity to have a competitive place in the international marketplace and be a valuable asset in the educational domain anywhere. Almost all participants in this study admit that obtaining a CELTA made them more aware and professional in their work and become good references and advisors to other colleagues at the academic institutions where they work.

Recommendations

The implementation of the CELTA course should be compared with, and/ or get customized to fit, or serve different purposes in different parts of the world. Furthermore:

- The academic background of CELTA trainees should be studied and investigated by means of a survey or study to consider some variables such as gender, age, qualifications, experience, mother tongue, etc.
- Upon completing the CELTA course, trainees should be asked to evaluate the training course by means of questionnaires, essay questions, or oral evaluation, if possible.
- In order to be competitive in the international job market, teachers should seriously consider doing CELTA diploma.
- Recruiting agencies should be objective and focus on the quality of teachers, regardless of sex, colour, appearance, native or nonnative, otherwise, it loses its credibility.
- Doing CELTA means highly qualified people with a good reputation and better chances to work abroad and get a higher salary.
- Doing CELTA gives trainees the chance to acquire new and successful techniques in classroom management, which in return, improves and increases students' class participation and engagement.
- Doing CELTA, or any highly ranked courses, results in reducing the burnout state of a teacher; he/she becomes more motivated with a great will and desire towards teaching.

Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to thank all the CELTA holders who agreed to do this questionnaire without whom things would not have progressed this way. They really played an important and crucial role in all parts of the study. Their experience, zeal, and collaboration were appreciated.

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Appendices

Questionnaire

Dear participants,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information for an article titled “Significance of CELTA in Teaching Field” This information will not be misused, and you will not be identified.

Part One

Yes/ No questions

1. Do you think CELTA offered you the adequate **training** in teaching English?
(A)Yes (B)No
2. Do you think Celta **provided** you with adequate training in teaching skills in particular?
(A)Yes (B)No
3. Do you think CELTA **supplied** you with adequate training in being familiar with different **cultures**?
(A)Yes (B)No
4. Do you think CELTA was **up to date** at the time you did it?
(A)Yes (B)No
5. Do you think CELTA had **encouraged** you to **reflect** on – reconsider – your previous experiences as a language learner?
(A)Yes (B)No
6. Do you think CELTA encouraged you to **teach** in a different way-better than in the past?
(A)Yes (B)No
7. Do you think CELTA promoted **flexibility** and **professionalism in using different teaching practices** and tasks for different situations?
(A)Yes (B)No
8. Do you think that CELTA **balanced teacher-centered and student-centered learning** on the course?
(A)Yes (B)No

9. Did CELTA give you **guidance how to teach English differently?**

(A)Yes (B)No

10. Did CELTA teach you how to **evaluate and critique yourself** as a teacher?

(A)Yes (B)No

Part Two

Agree / Disagree

11. Personally, I **recommend** doing CELTA.

(A)Agree (B) Disagree

12. CELTA taught me how to **choose** and **use** foreign language materials perfectly.

(A)Agree (B)Disagree

13. CELTA taught me how to **adapt or customize** foreign language teaching materials to suit my students.

(A) Agree (B)Disagree

14. CELTA increased my power of **self-evaluation and become positively, a unique one?**

(A)Agree (B)Disagree

15. CELTA taught me **foreign language testing** and evaluation skills.

(A) Agree (B)Disagree

Open-ended questions (optional)

16. How did CELTA meet your **professional needs?** Mention some.

.....

17. What are the **needs of the trainees** as future EFL instructors?

.....

18. How did CELTA **affect instructors' classroom practices?**

.....

19. As an EFL instructor, how do you **evaluate** the CELTA course?

.....

20. What **suggestions** do you recommend for **improving** CELTA?

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