

## The CELTA Course, 100% Online at Saint Mary's University – A Trainee Experience

I first heard of CELTA through a co-worker. We met working for Air Canada, a job that both of us loved. She had taken the CELTA course many years back and taught in Turkey for 11 years. This was, as she described, an experience of a lifetime. I unfortunately lost my job due to COVID-19 and started to panic about my future. Knowing I had a passion to travel, I applied to take the CELTA course. Although I lost a job I really enjoyed, I was given an opportunity that will forever change my life.

I was very nervous to begin the course. I knew it was going to be not only time consuming, but also very challenging. I studied grammar for *three weeks* prior to beginning the course, as I knew this was going to be my weakness when it came to teaching English. In addition, I warned all my friends that I would not be able to see them for five weeks (the duration of the CELTA course). I was healthily anxious to begin the course, as I really did not know what to expect, especially considering the course was 100% online due to COVID-19. I had taken online courses before, but I knew none of them would be as intense as CELTA.

The biggest asset to being able to take CELTA 100% online was the ability to work from the comfort of my own home. This helped me save money and time! I surprisingly really enjoyed working from home and would consider teaching online. I feel as though taking the course online opened up possibilities of working from home indefinitely, something that I would have never considered before. In addition to this, due to COVID I feel there is a shift towards online teaching. Having taken CELTA online, I feel this is an asset in terms of potentially teaching online. I also really enjoyed that my classmates were from all over the world. Some were living in Halifax, NS, and others in Brazil and the US. I got to know many of my classmates really well, which helped make each day more fun. It was amazing to see how quickly I was able to form bonds with my classmates in a short five weeks, and I cannot begin to explain how quick those five weeks go by.

Another thing I enjoyed about CELTA being offered online is the opportunity to be able to take the course anytime, anywhere. The only minor problem I had was slight connectivity issues with my WIFI. This never lasted more than five minutes and I was able to work around it! I happened to use my personal hotspot from my phone during desperate times and that helped a lot! Other than that, I enjoyed taking the course from home.

In addition, I really enjoyed CELTA being offered in five weeks in comparison to its' usual four-week duration. Each Wednesday was a self-study day, meaning no class. This was tremendously beneficial in terms of breaking up the week to give time to work on homework, which was necessary because, as I'm sure you know, there is a lot of homework.

My biggest concern prior to beginning the course was teaching grammar lessons. I have a feeling that this is a fear many of us CELTA teachers have, because as native English speakers, we are never taught English and just know it by heart! I happened to watch an amazing YouTube series from Khan Academy that helped a lot. I will share the link below for any of you who are interested. Having completed the CELTA course now, I am a lot less scared of teaching these lessons. The instructors were amazing in guiding how to teach grammar lessons. In addition, each lesson is very focused on a specific piece of grammar. I was able to research thoroughly what I was going to teach, which increased my confidence. Overall, I will continue to learn about English grammar, but I feel a lot better about teaching grammar lessons.

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professional bonds with the students. I believe it is more challenging to do this through a screen than in a face-to-face setting, but I was proven wrong! I feel as though I got to know my students and classmates very well, some of which I am still in touch with. It's pretty amazing that in just five weeks I got to know so many people from all over the world! The instructors were amazing to guiding us to form bonds with the students, giving helpful tips like addressing each student by name, as well as smiling through the camera. This helps engage the students and make them feel like you're enjoying your time with them.

The biggest challenge that I had during the course probably was to manage all of the homework. I am a very proactive student and like to get things done as soon as possible, but in a short five weeks, sometimes you have to do things last minute! One thing I would always suggest is getting close with your classmates. This helped me so much when I was having difficulties with homework or my lesson plans. I actually spoke to my classmates before my instructors for feedback and found this extremely helpful! I knew how busy the instructors were, so I utilized my connections with my classmates. The instructors, however, are always there for assistance! They are very quick to respond and always want to help. I found the instructors were excellent guidance throughout my experience and gave valuable feedback. In terms of homework, another piece of advice I would give is to prioritize what's most important. I always made sure I felt very confident about my lesson plans before completing the other homework tasks.

Overall, I think taking CELTA online was a great choice for me. I got to save money and work from the comfort of my own home. In addition, all of the concerns I had with taking the course online diminished during the course! I got to form great bonds with my students and classmates and was able to learn so much in just a short period of time. I would 100% recommend taking the CELTA course, as it opens up so many opportunities.

Here is the link I promised to share: [Khan Academy – Introduction to Grammar.](#)

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