Final Assignment

Overall mark (delete the inapplicable)	Met
CPs should:	
Reflect on their teaching and how it has changed over the duration of the course	Met
Reflect upon what they feel has worked and not worked for them in terms of methods, approaches and tasks covered in the course. This should make reference to specific theories and principles but note that the overall reflection should be based on the practical rather than the theoretical	Met
Reference both skills and systems lessons	Met
Reference more than one class type (if appropriate)	Met
Refer to specific modules of the CAM course that have had a bearing on their teaching	Met
Indicated student reactions to tasks and approaches tried in lessons	Met
Reflect on their action plan (see Module 1) saying what has been achieved and how and what their post-course action plan is, clearly stating how they intend to implement it. (approx 500 words)	Met
Adhere to the word limit	Met
Tutor's comment Thank you for this summary of your experiences and reflections around the CAM course. It appears that the course proved a valuable experience for you! You have had the chance to learn about and experiment with different lesson frameworks – something that I think was particularly useful in your own case, as it moved you away from what you suggest was a reliance on the coursebook. From my own experiences as a teacher trainer, more teachers could certainly benefit from this sense of adventure and exploration, and so this represents a very positive outcome from the course. During the course itself you have shown yourself to be a motivated and determined teacher – thank you for your efforts in the forums, both on your own and in your groups. Judging by the points you have raised in this report, you can see the value of the material you engaged with, and now have a much clearer view of the way forward in terms of your own development. Great work! Christopher Walker	

20.02.2022	

I. During the duration of this course, my teaching has changed in numerous ways.

In general terms, I think this course has made me a more reflective teacher. Prior to starting this course, I had a bad habit of just following the textbook, and sometimes adding in some games just to keep my students awake. However, doing this course has caused me to start thinking more about what I was doing in the classroom and why, and to try to design lessons with more of a purpose.

In more specific terms, the first way that my teaching has changed is that while doing this course, I became more conscientious about the use of lesson frameworks. Although I had studied some of these lesson frameworks before on the CELTA, I had not continued to use them in my day to day teaching. Instead, I had gotten into the bad habit of viewing my lessons as a series of activities rather than a framework. But this course made me remember the frameworks, and I have started using them again. Changing my lesson styles in this way initially caused confusion both among my students and my teaching assistant. In one particular lesson in a beginner class, a teaching assistant asked me why I was not calling on individual students to produce the grammar point, and I had to explain to him that I was following a Present Practice Produce framework, and that it was still the presentation stage of the lesson. However, after this initial confusion, the students and teaching assistants now seem to feel much more comfortable in the lesson now that they know it is following a framework.

In addition to being more conscientious about using frameworks generally, I have also started using the Test Teach Test framework more specifically. I had previously been familiar with this framework in theory, but had never used it in practice. However, I used it for Portfolio assignment 2, and because the student reaction to it was positive, I have continued to use it for several more lessons since then. I have found it a very useful way to teach systems lessons such as grammar and vocabulary.

Also, as a result of what I have learned about guided discoveries in module 5, I have started to incorporate more guided discoveries into my lessons. I designed a guided discovery for the portfolio task, and when I tried it out in the classroom, the students were engaged with the task, so I decided to try to make more. It has been hard work making them, but the students seem to enjoy them and they have told me that it helps them to remember the grammar points better. So I will try to continue making and using guided discoveries in the future.

Another change that I have made is that I have started praising students more for their production in skills classes like speaking and writing. This was a result of experimenting with a new error correction technique in portfolio 8: “only praising for good language use”. Although I ultimately found the experimentation of only praising

was too restrictive, and so decided that this technique did not work for me in the extreme form, there was no doubt that the students reacted positively to being praised for their language. So this was a reminder to me that I needed to praise the students more in addition to correcting their mistakes. The student response to the increased praise has been positive, and it has resulted in increased student participation in speaking and writing activities.

Another big change for me was in Module 9, when I realized the importance of teaching my students about cohesion in writing. As luck would have it, I was completing Module 9 at the same time that I was grading my students' writing essays in a pre-advanced class, and so I was learning about the need to teach about discourse analysis features like cohesion and coherence at the same time I was realizing that these features were lacking in my students' writing. While writing my portfolio assignment for Module 9, I researched some useful activities on teaching cohesion and coherence from *Beyond the Sentence* by Scott Thornbury. I have been using those activities since then, and not only has the quality of the student writing improved, but the students have commented that they find the activities very useful.

I also felt like I learned a lot of interesting things about different theories of learning from Module 13. I was particularly interested in Krashen's input hypothesis. Although the pre-session reading made clear that Krashen's theories were still being debated, it struck me that even if Krashen is wrong about the input hypothesis being the only requirement for language acquisition, input is still probably incredibly useful for language learning. Therefore, since Module 13, I have tried to increase the amount of input my students have exposure to. For my pre-advanced and advanced classes, I have started trying to get the students to do extensive reading journals. Also, at the beginning of every class, I try to recommend some material to them that I think would be useful either for extensive reading or extensive listening. The student reaction to this has been mixed. It is always hard to get the students to do extra studying outside of class. However, while it has not been 100% success rate, some of the students have been doing the extensive reading journals, and some of them have even been using my recommendations. I think the students who have been doing this have been benefiting from it.

One of the things I really enjoyed about this course was not only the course materials, but also the opportunities to share ideas with my classmates. For example, in Module 4, all the classmates shared their ideas for successful productive activities. I got several ideas from this for speaking and writing activities, and I have even used some of these in my own classroom. For example, a classmate suggested Taboo as a game to encourage speaking fluency. I have since used this in my classroom, and I have found it works really well, and the students love it.

II.

Looking back at my action plan, I believe I have made progress in all of the main goals, even though I have not followed all of the specific actions.

My first goal was to make my receptive skills lessons more engaging, and I believe I have succeeded. This was greatly aided by the reading materials in Module 3. I particularly found the stages of a receptive skill material in that module to have many useful tips in terms of creating engagement. The lead-in and prediction stage, for example, have been very useful in getting students involved.

My second goal was to get my students speaking more in my classroom. This has also been a success. In Module 4, I got a lot of ideas for productive activities, including speaking, from my classmates, and I have been experimenting with some of these activities in my classes. The increased variety of speaking activities has helped to increase speaking more in my class. In addition, the fact that I have started praising students more for good language use (as a result of Portfolio 8) has also resulted in students being more willing to speak in my class.

My third goal was to improve my ability to create clear lesson aims. Although there was no specific module from the course that aligned with this, I think my ability to create clear lesson aims was helped by the module on lesson frameworks, at least in terms of the systems lessons. Because the systems frameworks help me to focus the lesson towards one specific goal, this helps me to think concretely about the lesson aims.

However, although I think I improved on all my goals generally, I did not do all of the specific actions in my action plan. I had written the idea of observing colleagues as a way to improve both my receptive skills lessons. At the time I wrote this, I was expecting that I would return to face to face teaching before the course finished. However, the Covid shutdown lasted longer than I expected, and I have not yet returned to in-person teaching, and subsequently have had no opportunity to observe colleagues in action. However, observing colleagues in both receptive skills lessons (to see how they create engagement) and in speaking lessons (to see how they encourage students to speak) remains one of my post-course action plans.

The other failing was in my reading plan. As it turned out, I had enough difficulty balancing the weekly demands of this course with my full time teaching job, and I did not have time to read the books that I had planned to. However, now that I am finished with the course, I expect to have more time for professional development reading, and reading these books. For my post-course action plan, I would still like to read *Teaching Listening Comprehension* by Penny Ur for receptive skills, *Teaching Speaking* by Christine Goh and Anne Burns for speaking skills, and re-read *Learning Teaching* by Jim Scrivener for creating clear lesson aims.

In addition to this, I would also like to create some new post-course action plans. I have been actually discussing this question with my manager recently, and I mentioned to my manager that I sometimes had trouble putting my theoretical

knowledge into practice. My manager suggested I start requesting more developmental observations, where I can try out new activities in class and get feedback about their effectiveness. So another post-course action plan is to request more developmental observations, particularly in speaking lessons and receptive skills lessons.