DELTA Module Three

Extending Practice and ELT Specialism

English Language Teaching Management

Examination Report

September 2020

Contents

1. Report on the Extending Practice and ELT Specialism Option

1.1. Introduction

DELTA Module Three aims to develop candidates' knowledge of, and competence in, course planning and assessment in relation to a specialist area, and includes: research into a specialist area; approaches to needs analysis; curriculum and syllabus design principles and different types of syllabus; course design and evaluation; and assessment of learners. The module is assessed by means of a 4,000-4,500 word Extended Assignment (EA), submitted in June or December of each year, in which candidates carry out an independent investigation leading to the design of a course programme related to their chosen specialist area. Candidates choose a specialism which is relevant to their current or intended teaching context (for example, Business English, Young Learners, ESP, EAP, Exam Classes, One-to-One, etc.). The EA consists of five Parts:

1. Introduction: Review and key issues
2. Needs analysis and commentary
3. Course proposal
4. Assessment proposal
5. Conclusion

To complete the assignment, candidates need to:

- review the relevant literature of their chosen topic area and identify key issues
- explain how they identified the needs of a chosen group of learners, and how they used diagnostic tests to establish learning priorities
- design a course of at least 20 hours, providing a rationale for its design, goals and teaching approach
- explain how the course will be assessed and evaluated
- outline how the proposed course design relates to the issues identified in the introduction.

In doing so, candidates are expected to demonstrate an informed understanding of: their chosen topic area; key principles of needs analysis and diagnostic testing; key principles of and types of course and syllabus design; as well as key principles and roles of assessment.

The EA is assessed according to a detailed Mark Scheme which allocates marks for each of the five assessment categories each of which is divided into three sub-categories (as seen below).

Grasp of topic
- Review of the relevant literature in the topic area
- Understanding of key issues in the topic area
- Application of knowledge to practice and identification of key issues

Needs analysis and commentary
- Key principles of needs analysis and diagnostic testing
- Analysis of the diagnostic test and identification of learner needs
- Discussion and justification of priorities supported by the needs analysis

Course proposal
- Key principles of syllabus and course design
- Justification of learning aims, teaching approach and the course in terms of learner needs
- Design of the course

Assessment
- Key principles of different types of assessment
- Justification of assessment procedures in terms of course design and learner needs
- Application of assessment procedures

> **Presentation and organisation**
> - Academic writing, language and referencing
> - Presentation, coherence and organisation
> - Clarity of argument and quality of ideas

These categories are marked in line with the grade descriptions as outlined in the ***DELTA Handbook for Tutors and Candidates*** (see page 70). Marks are awarded for each category and then totalled to form an overall grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail). The weighting for the assessment categories is as follows:

- Grasp of topic (25%)
- Needs analysis and commentary (20%)
- Course proposal (25%)
- Assessment (20%)
- Presentation and organisation (10%).

1.2. Purpose of this Report

This DELTA Module Three Report is based on EAs submitted in June and December 2019. These assignments are independent research projects owned by candidates, so it is not possible to provide model sample assignments. However, this report highlights some of the areas which were considered by examiners to be particularly strong or weak so as to give clearer guidance to candidates and centres.

A separate section on the English Language Teaching Management (ELTM) option is included at the end of this report (see page 16).

1.3. Principle Examiners' comments

The topic areas focused on (and the percentage of candidates who chose these) were as follows:
- Teaching exam classes **EX** (29.59%)
- English for Academic Purposes **EAP** (13.33%)
- Teaching young learners **YL** (15.28%)
- Teaching one-to-one **1to1** (10.89%)
- Business English **BE** (4.07%)
- Teaching monolingual classes **MON** (3.41%)
- CLIL/Embedded ESOL (teaching English through subject/work-based learning **CLIL** (1.79%)
- ESOL learners with literacy needs **ESOLLIT** (0.98%)
- Teaching in an non-English-speaking environment **NESE** (3.25%)
- Teaching in an English-speaking environment **ESE** (1.63%)
- Language development for teachers **LDT** (1.63%)
- English for Specific Purposes **ESP** (1.95%)
- Teaching learners online/through distance/blended learning **DL** (3.25%)
- Teaching multilingual classes **MUL** (3.09%)
- Language support **LS** (0.33%)
- Teaching English to learners with special requirements **SR** (0.16%)

A further 5.37% of candidates chose the ELTM option.

There was again a good range of chosen topics this time, although EX, EAP, YL and 1to1, constitute the four most popular topics and are consistently chosen by nearly three out of every four candidates.

1.3.1 Overall comments on the work of candidates

While the standard of assignments continues to improve with each session, there are still some candidates who do not follow the guidelines carefully enough and are unable to evidence a solid enough understanding of the required areas of the assignment to achieve a pass grade. The majority of assignments submitted for assessment again met the criteria and represented work which demonstrated a sound grasp of candidates' chosen specialism, principles of needs analysis, course design and assessment. There was again a good range of assignments which met the criteria for a Merit and Distinction.

Fewer and fewer candidates are now inserting visual diagrams into the body of the essay, as had been the case previously, following warnings not to try and circumvent the overall word limit through excessive use of charts or over-use of bullet points at the expense of prose. **Candidates should be advised, however, that content within pictures in the main body of the work do count in the word limit and over-length assignments will continued to be penalised or returned unmarked even if some written content is in picture form.**

1.3.2. Specific strengths

There were again many excellent assignments which demonstrated a high level of understanding of the requirements of the overall assignment and each section, and which in particular:
- researched the chosen specialism in insightful ways and critiqued the relevant literature;
- identified key issues in the specialism and their practical implications;
- used a range of tools, whose choices were explicitly justified, to identify needs;
- analysed the results clearly and thoroughly, and summarised the key findings in the text itself;
- clearly identified learning priorities which subsequently informed their choice of course objectives;
- designed comprehensive, and sometimes innovative, course plans which were well justified;
- created useful, logical, creative and relevant assessment procedures;
- were well-written and clearly organised with plentiful reference to key sources in each section.

Most assignments kept to the word limit, while those that exceeded the word limit were penalised accordingly. Candidates who wrote significantly less than 4500 words tended to struggle to provide sufficient depth of discussion throughout the assignment. Candidates who radically departed from the suggested word-limit for each section again tended to do poorly overall.

Strong assignments had a clear sense of development: implications in Part 1 were explicitly used in later sections for justification; identified priorities in Part 2 were easily traced to the data, then cross-referenced in Part 3; assessment tools in Part 4 were justified in relation to course objectives. Stronger assignments consistently integrated background reading into principled decisions, whereas weaker assignments often summarised the reading without explicitly linking it to decisions made. Strong scripts justified all decisions made clearly with reference to the literature, the chosen specialism and identified learner needs.

Some specific strengths were as follows:

Part 1
- Stronger candidates demonstrated a solid grasp of the specialism, with a sufficient number of sources underpinning the discussion.
- Stronger candidates did more than just display that they had done relevant reading; they were able to take a critical stance, have a personal opinion on different authors and/or interpret key ideas.
- Stronger candidates discussed a good range of issues related to the chosen specialism, and made sensible contrast to teaching General English, for example.
- Stronger candidates married theory, experience and practical application together well, using established knowledge effectively to establish clear course design implications.
- In cases where candidates narrowed their focus in Part 1 stronger assignments did so sensibly, e.g. exam classes to IELTS writing, where the focus on writing was clearly situated within exam classes rather than being a general discussion of teaching writing.

Part 2
- Stronger candidates demonstrated a solid familiarity with key sources and relevant terminology related to needs analysis (NA) and diagnostic testing (DT).
- Stronger candidates showed explicitly how their understanding of NA/DT principles informed their choice of instruments for both their NA and DT.
- Stronger candidates selected an appropriate range of instruments to identify needs and clearly designed their DT instruments logically based on the results of their NA.
- Stronger candidates analysed the results of their analysis and presented their data in a reader-friendly way in the main body with clear signposting to additional data in the appendices.
- Stronger candidates clearly identified learning priorities, in sufficient detail, which informed their subsequent choice of course objectives, and showed explicitly how these were arrived at, often using numbering/coding to make the links to the actual data very clear.

Part 3
- Stronger candidates demonstrated a solid familiarity with key sources and relevant terminology related to course and syllabus design (CSD) and types of syllabus.
- Stronger candidates showed explicitly how their understanding of CSD principles informed the design of the subsequent course.
- Stronger candidates justified their course design content and approach in Part 3 well, with explicit reference back to the data from Part 2 and the specialism from Part 1.
- Stronger candidates made explicit links between their chosen course objectives and the learning priorities from Part 2.
- Stronger candidates made effective use of colour-coding and arrows to show the development of strands of the syllabus and links between individual lessons.

Part 4
- Stronger candidates demonstrated a solid familiarity with key sources and relevant terminology related to assessment and course evaluation.
- Stronger candidates showed explicitly how the understanding of principles of assessment informed their choice of assessment procedures, and differentiated well between formative and summative assessment tools, showing clear understanding of their relative purposes.
- Stronger candidates explicitly linked their assessment procedures to their designed course in Part 3 by showing how each of the course objectives was to be tested, and indicated on the actual course plan exactly when in their 20-hour course each assessment would take place.
- Stronger candidates explicitly justified their assessment decisions with reference back to Parts 1, 2 and 3.
- Stronger candidates appended good samples of the testing schedule and assessment tools.

Writing

- Most assignments were well-written in academic style with appropriate and consistent use of referencing conventions both in-text and in the bibliography.
- In most cases, word counts were respected, both overall and in each section, and appendices were in the right document.
- Stronger assignments were presented well with good use of sub-headings within sections and with good signposting of clearly organised appendices, which were appropriately sequenced and clearly labelled, and with an appropriate number of relevant appended sample materials, diagnostic tests and assessment tools and rubrics.
- Stronger assignments logically developed a sense of argument throughout each part of the assignment and showed good coherence overall.
- Stronger assignments also showed clear links between sections, such that there was a logical thread running throughout the assignment.

1.3.3 Specific weaknesses

The main areas of weaknesses continue to be issues such as:
- not adequately researching the chosen specialism, and not basing the whole assignment and course on the actual specialism;
- lack of explicit discussion of key principles with reference to key sources in some or all sections, and not explicitly linking the background reading to specific decisions taken;
- failure to adequately analyse learners' needs and identify learning priorities from the analysis with clear reference to the actual data;
- failure to justify the design of the course with reference to the needs identified, such that course objectives did not explicitly link back clearly to the learning priorities;
- lack of clarity in the overall assessment plan as to which course objectives were to be tested, when and how during the course, and why;
- lack of clear development of argument within sections and lack of explicit links between sections.

There were still unfortunately some candidates who seemed to have not fully grasped the requirements for this assignment. A recurrent theme among weaker candidates is a lack of sufficient reference to reading of key sources, in some or all sections of the assignment, to support their discussion; some candidates did not refer to the reading they had done, while others seemed not to have done much reading at all. Weaker assignments also tended to rely too much on general methodology books, such as Thornbury, Harmer, Scrivener and Hedge, instead of more specialised key sources, to discuss their chosen specialism, needs analysis, diagnostic testing, course design, types of syllabus, assessment, course evaluation, etc. Some weaker assignments seemed to be based on an already prepared course and assessment, and were therefore not convincingly linked to a principled analysis of learner needs and/or a clear understanding of the chosen specialism.

Failing candidates also tended to have some or many of the following specific problems.

Part 1
- Some candidates narrow the focus too much; while the handbook notes the validity of doing so in certain cases, it is important that issues related to the general specialism are still explicitly discussed and form the bulk of the section. Some candidates narrowed to one skill and then spent too many words on the skill generally rather than discussing it in relation to the specialism.
- Some candidates tend to over-use direct quotes from sources the effect was less sense of ownership of the content, and little critical response to what had been read.
- Generally implications could be flagged more explicitly as something the specialism course designer needs to consider implementing; stronger candidates numbered / flagged these for cross-referencing later. Some candidates flagged implications at the end of Part 1 but did not sufficiently relate to them again in Parts 2, 3 or 4.
- Some candidates showed 'mismatches' between this choice of specialism and the nature of the profiled group and the subsequent course content.
- In some cases, the class presented as an IELTS class taking a foundation course either within a private school context or on some other kind of higher education pathway course in/outside of an HE establishment. In others, the group was clearly located within higher education and deemed to be EAP by the institution even though their level was sometimes very low and their needs reflected more those of a GE group in a MONO or NESE/ESE context. As a result, reading some course plans without access to prior essay content would not necessarily have revealed any EX or EAP specialism focus at all.

Part 2
- Reference to theory and use of relevant terminology was sometimes too light in this section, with often an initial quote and then little else.
- Some candidates failed to offer substantial qualitative analysis of diagnostic tests, instead just appending tables of scores. This does not help the reader fully understand the learners' lacks.
- Some candidates focused on one skill in the DT without adequate justification for this from their NA. In some cases the NA results suggested a different skill should have been focused on in the DT.

- Some candidates failed to provide sufficient analysis of the data gathered, only presenting numerical scores in Document 1 without collating/presenting detail and/or supporting analysed samples or extracts in Document 2 (i.e. some EX courses, where only IELTS band scores or marking criteria were given). In such cases the reader is left to trust the accuracy of the key DT findings and Priorities in the main body.
- Some candidates briefly listed their learning priorities, without discussing how they emerged from the findings of the NA/DT, and how/why they were prioritised; some failed to list priorities at all, leaving the reader to surmise from the findings what the priorities might be (in some cases priorities were not listed until Part 3).

Part 3
- Some candidates discussed course design principles and types of syllabus without showing how these principles informed their decisions about the course content, course approach and sequencing of objectives and lessons.
- Some candidates failed to clarify how the course objectives linked back to the learning priorities identified in Part 2; implications for course design from Part 1 should also be explicitly referred back to in this section to show how the specialism is shaping the course plan.
- Weaker course plans failed to show clearly how lessons linked to each other and how each lesson linked to the course objectives.
- Weaker assignments tended not to make it clear how teaching/learning is to take place, so it was difficult to identify (a) how development would take place, and (b) what approach was being espoused across different lessons or different phases of lessons.
- Weaker assignments had limited detail on course plans and/or materials such that discussed course design principles could not be evidenced, e.g., an EX course where testing seemed more prevalent than teaching in spite of this having been flagged in Part 1 as something to 'avoid'.

Part 4
- Some candidates either failed to discuss assessment principles explicitly or did so without showing how the principles informed the choice of assessment procedures.
- Some candidates failed to adequately distinguish between formative and summative assessment tools, and this led to confusion as to what was to be tested, and why.
- Some candidates did not make it explicit how the assessment tools and procedures mapped onto the objectives selected in Part 3. Some candidates also failed to relate assessment tools to learner needs.
- Some candidates failed to provide an overall sense of the assessment programme: exactly what was to be implemented when / how often.
- Some candidates had significant imbalances in word count for sections, while some candidates seemed to have run out of time by Part 4. Word counts of only 600 were rarely able to allow for sufficient coverage in the hands of even strong candidates let alone weaker ones.

Writing
- Weaker assignments lacked adequate proof-reading in terms of language inaccuracies, mis-spelt author names, problems with pronunciation, inconsistent margins, font size, line spacing between sections and sub-sections, etc.
- Weaker candidates continued to poorly signpost/acknowledge appended materials or even mis-place them.
- Some candidates put too much discussion in the appendices rather than in the main body of the assignment where it should have been summarised.
- Some candidates consistently ran some words together or misused hyphens throughout the essay, and/or failed to leave a space after full stops, presumably as a way to circumvent the word count overall. Such cases were penalised.
- Part 5 is often overly descriptive without any limitations other than a 'given' (i.e., the number of suggested course hours).

1.4. Advice to centres and candidates

Centres are advised to consider the following when preparing candidates:

Part 1
- Encourage candidates to challenge what they read in the literature, using their own teaching experience to do so, and avoid making over-simplistic, and possibly misleading, generalisations, such as, '*exam learners are highly motivated*', or using sources just to say something obvious.
- Discourage narrowing of focus in general, but if done, provide support ensuring the key issues related to the specialism clearly come through in Part 1. If, for instance, candidates wants to narrow EX or EAP to writing, they should still discuss the key general issues and save writing for a single subsection (where they relate it to the specialism rather than generically talking about sub-skills).
- With YL assignments, ensure candidates make the 5-year age band explicit in Part 1, and that the discussion focuses on that band.
- Make sure candidates discuss general issues related to their chosen specialism and not just issues related to their own specific teaching content.
- Encourage candidates to explicitly flag implications, even number them for later cross-referencing.

Part 2
- Remind candidates that applying theory to practice is fundamental to this assignment. Analyse real NA tools, course plans and assessment tools in light of theoretical areas to reinforce this, e.g., look at a questionnaire and decide what kind of data it will yield; look at plans and identify syllabus and sequencing principles, determine what systems/skills are being addressed with assessment tools.
- Theory should be used to support decisions taken, using terms that relate to NA theory. This means showing how the diagnostic test identifies objective needs, the present situation, lacks etc.
- Ensure that the DT is buttressed by reference to principles, too, not just the NA tools.
- Make sure there is a clear justification for any narrowing of the focus of the needs analysis; it needs to be explicit, for instance, why only writing is focused on in the NA.
- Analysis of DTs in the appendices needs to be informative, to show where the priorities come from. Their needs to be some qualitative analysis rather than just scores, so for speaking and writing, for instance, a relevant set of criteria can be used to evaluate and comment on strengths and weaknesses to the required depth.

Part 3
- Ensure that the course focus on teaching and developing skills and/or language, not just practising.
- Encourage candidates not to just discuss their course in a general way, but to give specific examples, drawing the reader's attention to specific lessons in the plan. This can be done in a word efficient way e.g. (*Lesson 4, Lesson 8).*
- Remind candidates that they need to ensure the plan is usable for a 3rd party; i.e. *if another teacher was to teach this course and achieve course goals, could they do so based on using the plan?* Key lesson steps need to be explicit and linked to the relevant material.
- Avoid trying to cover too much in the plan. There is a limit to what can be effectively covered in 20 hours. Help candidates to be able to properly prioritise.
- Remind candidates there are three pillars of justification in Part 3: specialism from Part 1, learner needs / priorities from Part 2, principles of course design within Part 3. Make sure they are referring to the earlier sections explicitly as part of justification for planning decisions.

Part 4
- Candidates need to be trained to think of assessment not generically but to look at each objective and brainstorm ways to assess it formatively and summatively. They can then challenge each other to choose the most effective assessment tool based on the specialism.
- Ensure that assessment is linked explicitly to the course content: ensure that candidates think about assessment tools not just in general but per objective.
- Ensure that objectives are linked to the relevant tool explicitly. This may involve showing how "generic" assessment criteria are being used / adapted to account for specific objectives.
- It is good to flag FA and SA in the course plan (e.g. colour coded) and/or to include an assessment overview table. This can be appended, though there should be no discussion / justification within the appended table; it is simply to help the reader confirm what has been mentioned in the body.
- Ensure each tool receives appended support through a relevant sample.

Writing
- Encourage candidates to start with their own experience and then *support* with reference to the literature, and also to read widely critically, finding for instance different view in the literature on a given point; they should then respond in light of their own experience.
- Training also needs to be given in linking what is discussed to previous sections, whether it be to the concerns of the specialism in Part 1, the needs in Part 2 or the course objectives in Part 3.
- Discourage use of long direct quotes, keeping these for short phrases that cannot be paraphrased, and discourage direct citations which are not responded to critically.
- Discourage candidates from putting the subtotals of word counts under each section. They are not needed and will be included in the overall word count.
- Constant reference backwards to aspects discussed earlier is very helpful in justify the decision-making process – even if those decisions seem obvious. Justify, justify, justify!

Candidates are advised to use the following checklist as a final check before submitting their assignment.

	clearly chosen a specialism from the list provided, and indicated this on the cover page?	Yes/No
	outlined key features of the specialism and indicated what distinguishes it from other forms of teaching, such as general English?	Yes/No
	referred to and commented on background reading and key sources throughout?	Yes/No
	discussed principles underlying NA/DT, course and syllabus deign, assessment, etc?	Yes/No
	clearly justified my choice of needs analysis tools?	Yes/No
	included completed samples of diagnostic tests used in the appendix?	Yes/No
Have I	analysed the results of the diagnostic tests adequately?	Yes/No
	justified the learning priorities I have identified clearly in relation to my needs analysis?	Yes/No
	justified my course objectives in terms of learner needs?	Yes/No
	added my course plan and NA/DT summary results as an appendix to the main body of the text?	Yes/No
	included sufficient detail in my course plan?	Yes/No
	made it clear what I will assess and how, with samples in the appendix?	Yes/No
	outlined how the course will be evaluated?	Yes/No
	respected the word-limit and indicated the word count on the cover page?	Yes/No
	linked all parts of the assignment coherently to one another?	Yes/No
	signposted all the appendices clearly in the main body of the text?	Yes/No

Centres are advised to continue to monitor candidates' progress in this assignment, through individual tutorials and by commenting on drafts, in order to ensure that they are meeting the criteria before they complete the whole assignment (although the final submission should be checked to make sure tutor comments have been removed and addressed). Some candidates might require additional advice, such as how to include quotes within the text.

Centres should continue to advise candidates that all assignments are automatically checked electronically for plagiarism and that plagiarism (both intentional and accidental) will be penalised. Plagiarism checks include checks against all previously submitted assignments as well as assignments or parts of assignments which include passages copied from online resources or books, or from assignments obtained from colleagues or given by centres as a model. Centres should inform candidates that submission of an assignment which has evidence of plagiarism will lead to the candidate's disqualification and may result in a ban on re-entry of up to three years.

Tutors and candidates are **strongly encouraged** to carefully read the information on plagiarism contained on page 76 in the *DELTA Handbook for tutors and candidates* and the additional guidelines on plagiarism which can be found at:

http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/347250-plagiarism-a-guide-for-DELTA-module-three.pdf

1.5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This section contains a list of questions which are frequently asked by centres and/or to centres/tutors by candidates. Questions and answers are grouped under each part of the assignment below, while answers to each question are italicised below each question.

Part 1

1. How many key issues should I mention?

Between four and six, although some issues may require more coverage than others. It may be the case that some issues are large, in which case fewer may be explored. Try to ensure you choose 'key' issues for your chosen specialism in general, and not too specific to your own context.

2. Should I make implications a separate section at the end, or weave them into the discussion of issues?

Both approaches are possible and equally valid. However, it is important that the implications are clearly linked to and stem from a discussed issue.

3. Is it possible to combine specialisms?

No, there needs to be one main specialism permeating the whole assignment which is discussed in detail in Part 1. However, the teaching context may be such that your 1to1 learner is studying BE for example, in which case 1to1 can be the chosen specialism, but you can briefly refer to BE in Parts 2 and 3 in terms of the learning context and course content and approach.

4. When is it permissible to have a single learner – in which specialisms?

There are no specific requirements regarding which specialism can be taught within a one-to-one context: we accept that one-to-one teaching has become common and that this may represent the natural teaching context for a particular candidate. If this is the case, a single learner may be permissible. Past submissions have included one learner who is going to be learning EX, BE, ESP, and EAP and other specialisms such as YL, LS, and SR may also be possible. However, candidates should be aware that some specialisms will obviously not lend themselves to a one-to-one context (e.g. MON, MUL).

Please also note that:

1. *Choosing a one-to-one should not be for the purpose of collecting less data. With just one learner it is expected that you collect NA/DT data to a much greater depth than you would for a whole class. Where there is uncertainty about whether a one-to-one context is permissible it is always best for your course tutor to check with Cambridge Assessment English before proceeding.*
2. *Candidates who choose a single learner must be clear what their chosen specialism is: BE, EX etc. Part 1 should focus on the specialism and not confuse this with one-to-one teaching. If the candidate wishes to explore the particulars of teaching individual learners, then 1to1 is the specialism to select.*
3. *A common reason for failing when selecting one learner is confusing the focus of the assignment, trying to specialise in both their chosen specialism (e.g. BE) and one-to-one teaching. This leads to a confused and superficial treatment of two specialisms in Part 1 and should be avoided. When a candidate chooses to design (for example) a BE course for a single learner, Part 1 should explore the specialism of BE and Part 2 should investigate the specific needs of the learner through the NA and DT.*

5. Is it possible to narrow from a general specialism to an aspect of it, e.g. EAP to EAP writing?

It is not necessary to narrow down the specialism. Even in a situation where your chosen learners in part 2 are taking an EAP writing course, you still need to discuss EAP in general in part 1, with just one part of this section focused on writing within EAP. It should not turn into a whole section discussing writing.

6. Does an 'issue' mean 'a problem'? Or is it the same as a feature of the specialism?

Not necessarily a problem, but features that need to be considered when designing a course, teaching and assessing learners. E.g. in EAP an issue might be which level to start teaching EAP; another might be whether to teach English for General Academic Purposes or English for Specific Academic Purposes.

7. Do 'implications for course design' mean implications for my course design or courses in general in my specialism?

This should refer to general implications. Try not to start referring to your own context until Part 2.

8. Are implications for course design to be focused on the teacher or the planner?

This can be both. Keep in mind that these implications should be referred to in later sections of the assignment as part of justification for course planning and assessment decisions.

9. Some specialisms seem to overlap. I want to write about MON courses in a NESE. Should I write about both in Part 1?

As discussed in 5 above, you need to choose one main specialism for your assignment. If you choose MON it is inevitable that you will mention NESE, but this should not be the main focus in Part 1.

10. In the YL specialism, we have to give a 5-year age range; e.g. 8 to 13. Why is this? There are big differences between 8-year-olds and 13-year-olds.

Part of the discussion in Part 1 will inevitably be general to teaching YLs, but specific issues related to the chosen age range need to be discussed. This allows you to officially respond to your reading and refer to your own experience regarding specific ages.

11. My learners are 4 years old. What is the youngest age group for my course I can choose for the YL specialism?

There is no lower limit specified, but it is important for the tutor to consult Cambridge English if the learners have not yet started formal education. This is to ensure that the candidate will be able to fulfil the required assessment criteria for a pass grade.

12. With the Special Needs specialism, do I have to choose just one of the suggested areas within that for Part 1 e.g. dyslexia?

The focus should initially be teaching English to learners with SRs as the principles involved in understanding a certain SR, and adapting the teaching environment to suit the learner's needs, will be the same across a range of SRs. When the general principles have been explored, candidates should then narrow down to focus on the specific needs of dyslexic learners and show how these needs can be met by adapting materials, teaching approaches etc. This will allow them to state specific practical implications for needs analysis, course design and assessment of dyslexic learners; these will be returned to in Parts 2 – 4, forming an important part of rationale for decisions made.

Part 2

1. My learners will be leaving before I get to the end of the assignment. Will this be a problem?

No, although it will be necessary to design and run the NA and DT before the students leave. It may also be the case that follow-up questions occur when writing Part 3, so this should be taken into consideration too.

2. Can I use the students' placement test instead of running a DT?

No. Placement tests are not sufficiently tailored to the target needs of the students in question, as they are designed to be used with all students at all levels. It is important that the DTs selected can be justified in relation to the established needs / target situation of the learners.

3. Can I narrow my focus from the outset of Part 2, e.g. focus the NA/DT on EX writing rather than all EX skills/papers? Where is this justified?

If the NA results clearly show that learners want/need to focus mainly on writing then you can narrow your DT to focus just on writing, but it would need to establish clearly which aspects of writing the learners are currently strong/weak in. Alternatively, if the teaching context is such that only one skill will be focused on, e.g. if you are teaching an EAP writing course, then the NA can focus just on that skill. However, even if the DT focuses on writing, you may identify some language development needed to support learners' writing, such as vocabulary, linkers, etc.

4. What is the difference between analysis appended in appendix 2, key findings and course priorities?

Appendix 2 contains the raw data. In the appendix in the main document you include a summary of the collated data, for example, charts showing a comparison between learners across different skills. The main findings, main strengths and weaknesses from the DT are discussed in the main body in Part 2. Together with the NA results, you need to prioritise the main areas which your course is going to focus on, and from which the subsequent course objectives will derive in Part 3.

5. There is so much to write about in Part 2. How can I manage the low word count for this section? Can I just refer to appended collated data in Part 2 rather than write out again the key findings in my essay body?

It is all about prioritising and linking/signposting to the appended data and collated data. You can refer the reader to the collated data in the appendix, but you will still need to summarise the key findings.

6. There has been a lot of controversy over learning styles. Do we still have to write about it?

Not unless it is something you consider important in your NA.

7. What is the difference between course priorities in Part 2 and course objectives in Part 3?

The course objectives need to be worded as objectives (see the literature) and need to be clearly derived from, and explicitly linked to, the learning priorities. So, having established learners needs at the end of Part 2, then the course objectives in Part 3 will verbalise how this is to be achieved through your course.

8. What groups are suitable for EAP?

The EAP specialism is primarily intended for groups who are actively engaged in pre-sessional or in-sessional EAP instruction. It is not advisable to choose group of teenagers or young adults who are intending to take IELTS in the future, but who are not clearly studying in an EAP context.

Part 3

1. How are the objectives I set in Part 3 different from the priorities in Part 2?

Part 3 objectives should be narrower than the Part 2 priorities. For instance, the NA and DT may identify that the students need to work on 'talking about the past more accurately' which might translate into objectives relating to past simple and past continuous.

2. Do I need to append all the materials I plan to use in my course?

No. There is no need to append copies of materials which are widely available, as the reader will be able to access these. Any teacher-designed materials, however, should be appended, as the reader will not be able to access these. A representative sample should be included.

3. How much detail should I go into in my course plan?

The plan needs to be sufficiently detailed to allow another teacher to deliver the programme in exactly the way you envisage it yourself. A good indicator is to ask a colleague to talk you through the plan, indicating what happens in each lesson, what the homework will consist of and when and how assessment will take place. If the colleague can do so, the plan is sufficiently detailed.

4. Do objectives need to be itemised in the main body of Part 3? How many objectives should I have?

Yes, it is useful to list (and possibly number) them. Remembering that you have a 20-hour course you should not have too many objectives, probably five to eight would be suitable depending on how specific and detailed they are.

5. Some of the sample lesson plans I've seen from past Examination Reports are not very detailed. Is it enough to just put in the name of the lesson and lesson aim, e.g. Reading 3: helping learners with skimming and scanning?

See number 3 above. While we are not looking for detailed lesson plans for each of the 20 hours, it is important to see how each lesson is linked to the others and to the overall course objectives (hence the need to show the whole course in a chart). For each lesson we need to see what the focus is, some brief detail about what will be done, and what material will be used.

6. Do all objectives have to be language or skill focused? Can I include learner training objectives?

All are possible, depending on what your learners' needs and learning priorities are.

7. If I choose DL as my specialism, does my course plan have to include the face-to-face content as well as the online content?

Yes, it should include both.

Part 4

1. Do I need to test my students summatively?

Part 4 should indicate how the students are to be tested both formatively and summatively.

2. Should I include an appended assessment overview table?

It is not mandatory but it is a good idea. Make sure you signpost it in the main body.

3. How many sample assessment tools should I append? Does there need to be appended documentation for informal tools, e.g., tutorial forms, homework records?

It is a good idea to append one or two samples of your tools, particularly any that are hard to explain, but you do not need to append samples of all your documentation. As the term implies, these are 'samples'.

4. Do all key terms – content validity etc. – need to be explicitly defined?

Yes, they need to be mentioned, defined, referenced and also linked to the actual assessment procedures you choose for your course.

5. Should I link tools used to course objectives assessed? How can I do this?

Yes, they need to be linked. If you have an overview chart you can number reference the course objective, otherwise you need to state which course objective(s) are being assessed when you describe each assessment tool.

6. Do I have to give details in Part 4 about all my formative and summative assessments?

Yes, you need to state clearly what you will do in the 20-hour course in terms of formative and summative assessment.

7. Is it necessary to append a copy of all my formative and summative assessments?

No, but you should give some samples (see 3 above).

8. Do I have to append a full copy of a published exam like FCE if I use that for one of my tests? Can I just put in a link to this kind of material?

It is good to show some samples. Do remember, though, to design your own procedures and not rely entirely on published tests. Even if you do rely heavily on published exams because of the nature of your course, you still need to show how the published tests will be assessed with your course objectives in mind.

Overall

1. Is it possible to change earlier sections as I write later ones?

Yes, the writing of the assignment should be iterative and recursive. It often happens that later sections precipitate modifications in earlier sections.

2. Can I refer to internet sources as part of my reading?

Yes. Many practical suggestions can be found in internet sources. However, there should not be reference solely to internet sources: key writers should also be surveyed (although these could be consulted electronically). All internet sources need to be credible, and appropriately referenced.

3. I will be teaching the EAP course to my group. How much information should I give about the longer course at my school of which my EAP course will be part?

This should only be mentioned briefly.

4. Can I use some of the word count from Part 5 for more important sections?

Yes, you can, but it is still useful to have a good conclusion to the assignment. This section is also a good guide for you to ensure that you have linked all parts together.

5. In my country, I can't access some older texts on the recommended booklists. Do I have to read the original sources for key theories/principles?

It is important to access some 'key' sources for each of the four main parts of the assignment. The same applies to other modules of DELTA.

6. Am I penalised if I put some material in the wrong document?

This comes under 'Presentation and Organisation' of the assignment and is part of the EA assessment.

2. Report on the English Language Teaching Management (ELTM) Option

This DELTA Module Three ELTM Examination Report is based on those Extended Assignments submitted in June and December 2019 which focused on ELTM. It highlights areas which were considered by examiners to be particularly strong or weak and also provides specific comments in order to help centres and future candidates.

2.1. Overall comments on the work of candidates

The number of ELTM assignments submitted ranged between 15 – 25 per marking session. The majority of candidates again chose to focus on Academic Management. The breakdown of assignments submitted over the past two sessions is as follows:

- 65% Academic Management
- 26% Human Resource Management (HRM)
- 6% Customer Service
- 3% Marketing.

Many assignments were well done, and stronger candidates continued to make good use of guidance from their centres and the **DELTA Handbook for tutors and candidates**, followed the assignment guidelines well, adhered to the word-limit and made effective use of appendices to support their assignments.

Nevertheless, there were again some candidates who seemed to have either limited experience and/or limited understanding of ELTM issues, and who consequently found it challenging to produce a satisfactory assignment. There were still unfortunately some candidates who seemed to have not fully grasped the requirements for this assignment.

The following comments made by examiners reflect specific strengths and weaknesses related to the five assessment categories. Many of the main strengths and weaknesses are similar to those identified from previous years, but these are nevertheless reiterated here due to their importance in terms of guidance for centres and candidates.

2.2. Specific strengths

There were again some very good assignments which:
- reviewed and critiqued the relevant literature on ELTM in general, and the chosen area (Academic Management, Human Resource Management, Customer Service or Marketing) in particular, and identified key issues and their practical implications;
- evidenced extensive reading of the relevant literature to support decisions taken in Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the assignment;
- used a range of tools to analyse the educational context of their chosen language teaching organisation (LTO) and to identify and prioritise areas for improvement based on their analysis;
- presented clearly tailor-made, innovative and well-considered change proposals which were clearly linked to the findings from the previous analysis;
- explained clearly and in detail how their proposed changes would be implemented in different stages over time;
- were well-written and clearly organised with clear signposting to additional data and materials in the appendices.

Grasp of Topic
Some specific strengths were as follows:
- Demonstrating good awareness of the key literature related to their chosen area (AM, HRM, CS or Marketing) and the broader ELTM context;
- Evidence of reading of key sources;
- Demonstrating a sound understanding of what ELTM and the chosen area entail;
- Identifying key issues within ELTM and the chosen areas, and outlining their practical implications;
- Having a clear management perspective on issues discussed (in all parts of the assignment).

Situational Analysis
Some specific strengths were as follows:
- Good understanding of principles of customer and/or situation analysis (CA/SA) which clearly informed the choice of instruments used;
- Evidence of reading of key sources;
- Good collation of the situation analysis data clearly which was referenced to the appended main results;
- Clear conclusions drawn from the analysis which enabled the reader to follow the links from the data to the conclusions;
- Prioritising one or more areas from the weaknesses identified to address through the change proposal, rather than focusing the whole analysis on one narrow pre-determined area.

Proposal
Some specific strengths were as follows:
- Good understanding of principles of strategic management and school improvement with reference to the literature which clearly informed the change proposal;
- Evidence of reading of key sources;
- Comprehensive proposal for change, with sufficient detail to show what was intended and why;
- Clear justification for the change proposal; specifically how it will improve the LTO in terms of weaknesses identified in Part 2;
- Explicit discussion of the benefits of the proposal to the various stakeholders of the LTO.

Implementation
Some specific strengths were as follows:
- Critical engagement with theories of change management, and evidence as to how these informed the implementation plan; better submissions now frequently weigh up two or more models and use this discussion to justify why they have been influenced more by one in particular.
- Evidence of reading of key sources;
- Implementation plans which are clearly and explicitly informed by particular change management models;
- Detailed and well thought through implementation plans which outline the different steps needed to ensure the proposal works in practice
- Good discussion of issues such as potential resistance, and of practical ways to overcome them;

Presentation and Organisation
Some specific strengths were as follows:
- Good academic writing with consistent use of referencing in the body and bibliography, and good proof-reading to eliminate errors and inconsistencies in font size and line spacing, etc;
- Making good use of headings and sub-headings, as suggested in the DELTA Handbook, to organise the assignment;
- Clear presentation with effectively use of tables, charts and other visuals to support arguments and/or present data;
- Clear signalling of all appended materials in the main body of the assignment.
- Making explicit links between the different sections of the assignment to present a coherent, logical and consistent argument throughout.

2.3. Specific weaknesses

The biggest single weakness continues to be that a significant number of candidates are still presenting an assignment with a very narrow focus which has been chosen before conducting the Situational Analysis/Customer Analysis (SA/CA). In many cases, this has compromised what would otherwise be good quality work. It is important to stress that background reading and research should inform the analysis, not the other way round. Thus, the two main reasons preventing candidates from obtaining a passing grade have been:

- deciding the focus before conducting the situation/customer analysis;
- having too narrow a focus.

This may be due to poor guidance from some centres/tutors, or to some candidates failing to satisfactorily grasp the requirements as outlined in the DELTA Handbook. This trend is continuing despite it having been clearly highlighted in the previous Examination Reports in 2015 and 2017.

In some cases, weaker candidates chose a focus, such as 'an induction programme for new teachers', and discussed this in detail in Part 1 instead of focusing on ELTM and a specific area, such as Academic Management. Such candidates tended then to conduct their analysis in Part 2 solely on their chosen focus, for example only collecting data about the existing 'induction programme for new teachers', instead of conducting a wider Situational/Customer Analysis. The results of a wider SA/CA should signal major strengths and weaknesses of the LTO, and one of these weaknesses should then form the basis of the subsequent change proposal in Part 3. The starting point, however, for weaker candidates' change proposals tended to be the initially chosen focus rather than priorities emerging from the actual SA/CA data.

In other cases, the focus of the whole assignment was too narrow, such as 'introducing/designing a new course at the LTO'. Such assignments tended then to focus too much of Parts 3 and 4 on discussing the academic content/curriculum of the course rather than focusing on how the proposed change improves the LTO strategically and on how the proposed change itself would be implemented. Weaker candidates typically displayed a lack of management perspective in such cases.

As highlighted in the last two reports, candidates undertaking the ELTM specialism should be aware that the change proposal they suggest should be clearly justified in their SA/CA. They should avoid simply describing a "pet project" or a change which they have seen implemented at another LTO, but which may not answer the needs of the LTO they describe.

The weakest section of many assignments continued to be Part 2, with a substantial number of candidates failing to adequately discuss SA/CA principles, and failing to refer to a sufficient number of key sources, instead using sources merely to support comments about the particular narrow focus. Another frequent weakness is for some assignments to rely too heavily on analysis derived from a previous study or data collected by an external body. Instead candidates should conduct their own SA/CA and use this as the basis for identifying priorities and designing their subsequent change proposal.

Other main areas of weaknesses continued to be:

- lack of awareness of ELTM and general management issues;
- lack of theoretical underpinning for decisions taken in some or all sections;
- failing to analyse the educational context of the chosen LTO adequately;
- failing to identify overall strengths and weaknesses of the LTO;
- lack of a management perspective when discussing the change proposal;
- failing to explicitly link the change proposal to the needs identified;
- not adequately justifying the implementation plan;
- not considering potential resistance from stakeholders to the proposed change.

Grasp of Topic
Some specific weaknesses were as follows:

- Limited review of the literature with few key sources referred to and/or an over-reliance on a small number of sources;
- Focusing solely on the chosen area, such as AM, HRM, etc. without discussing ELTM in general or situating the chosen area within ELTM;
- Discussing a narrow topic, such as 'an induction programme for new teachers', before having conducted the SA/CA, rather than discussing ELTM and the chosen area, such as HRM in Part 1;
- Lack of organisation of ideas or development of argument within this section.

Situational Analysis
Some specific weaknesses were as follows:

- Lack of explicit discussion of principles of customer analysis/stakeholder analysis with few key sources referred to;
- Only analysing a very narrow area such as 'an induction programme for new teachers';
- Using tools, however appropriate, without explaining why they had been chosen and without reference to key principles of customer analysis/stakeholder analysis;
- Lack of thorough analysis of the data collected, and lack of visual presentation of the findings to collate the findings into main strengths and weaknesses.

Proposal
Some specific weaknesses were as follows:

- Lack of explicit discussion of principles of strategic management and school improvement, with few key sources referred to;
- Failing to show how an understanding of strategic management informed the design of the change proposal;
- Failing to show how the change proposal was informed by the customer analysis/stakeholder analysis;
- Failing to convincingly show why this proposal would improve the LTO's performance in the light of the wekanesses identified in Part 2.

Implementation
Some specific weaknesses were as follows:

- Lack of explicit discussion of principles of change management and decision-making, with few key sources referred to;
- Lack of clarity as to how the results of the situation analysis informed the choice of the actual implementation plan;
- Failing to show enough detail in the implementation plan in terms of the different stages over time to implement the whole proposal;
- Lack of reference to potential resistance of some stakeholders to the change proposal, instead assuming that the proposal would be accepted because it is logical, and lack of consideration in the plan as to how stakeholders would be involved or consulted so as to adress such resistance.

Presentation and Organisation
Some specific weaknesses were as follows:

- Lack of proof-reading, resulting in careless errors and/or incomplete sentences, and change in font size or inconsistent line spacing;
- Failure to adequately signal appendices in the main body of the assignment;
- Lack of logical development of argument within sections;
- Lack of explicit links between sections.

2.4. Advice to centres and candidates

Many ELTM candidates would clearly benefit from more help in writing this assignment. In particular many candidates need better guidance in how to approach their specific area and narrow the focus for their change proposal, as this is where failing candidates go wrong at the outset. Please advise candidates that the initial scope of the assignment, especially Part 1 discussion and Part 2 analysis should be broadly-based.

Centres working with a group of candidates would be advised to avoid encouraging each candidate to identify a different topic area at the outset (for example to ensure that no two candidates are working on the same area perhaps), but instead to stress that they should not be thinking about their change proposal until <u>after</u> they have collected and analysed their SA/CA data. This means ensuring that:
- Part 1 focuses on ELTM and one of the four specific areas (AM, HRM, etc) and NOT simply on a narrow topic such as 'classroom observations' or 'introducing a new course at the LTO';
- in Part 2 candidates analyse the <u>whole</u> LTO in order to identify main overall strengths and weaknesses, and NOT analyse for example the pros and cons of the existing observation system.
- Part 3 does not just consider the pedagogical benefits of a newly designed course, for example, but rather focuses on how the change proposal might address the weaknesses of the LTO in light of the SA/CA conducted in Part 2, with a clear management perspective.

Candidates considering whether or not to choose the ELTM option would be advised to:
- consider whether they have sufficient knowledge or understanding of ELTM from their own experience or observations, and thus whether they might be better placed to choose another specialism for the DELTA Module Three Extended Assignment;
- ensure that they have access to an actual LTO in order to obtain the data required for the analysis section of the assignment;
- read more widely about ELTM in general, as well as the specific area such as AM, HRM, etc, customer/stakeholder analysis, strategic management/school imporvement, change management and decision-making;
- think through in detail, and from a management perspective, how to design a proposal which strategically addresses some of the fundamental weaknesses identified in the analysis.
- consider in detail how the change would be implemented, and which steps need to be taken in which order, in order to satisfactorily improve the LTO.

Centres should also ensure that they can provide the necessary and appropriate guidance before advising a candidate to take the ELTM option.

Centres should continue to advise candidates that <u>all</u> assignments are automatically checked electronically for plagiarism and that plagiarism (both intentional and accidental) will be penalised. Plagiarism checks include checks against all previously submitted assignments as well as assignments or parts of assignments which include passages copied from online resources or books, or from assignments obtained from colleagues or given by centres as a model. Centres should inform candidates that submission of an assignment which has evidence of plagiarism will lead to the candidate's disqualification and may result in a ban on re-entry of up to three years.

Tutors and candidates are **strongly encouraged** to carefully read the information on plagiarism contained on page 81 in the ***DELTA Handbook for tutors and candidates*** and the additional guidelines on plagiarism which can be found at:

http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/347250-plagiarism-a-guide-for-DELTA-module-three.pdf

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