

Principal Examiner's Report

Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers Syllabus Code 8994

September 2010

Introduction

This report is based on feedback from the Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers (CIDTT) Examiners following assignment submissions from Centres throughout the last year. Centres are reminded that all documentation for this qualification is available to download from the CIE website at www.cie.org.uk

Candidate performance

The majority of candidates (94%) are presenting evidence for successful performance for each Module as shown in Table 1 below.

Module	Number of Candidates	Pass Grades	Dist Grades	Fail Grades	% Pass	% Dist	% Fail
1	674	515	118	41	76%	18%	6%
2	630	483	114	33	77%	18%	5%
3	635	489	114	32	77%	18%	5%
4	647	487	124	36	75%	19%	6%
Totals	2586	1974	470	142	76%	18%	6%

There is strong correlation between the number of candidates submitting assignments for each Module and achieving either a pass, distinction or fail grade. Despite the wide range of circumstances in which candidates are teaching, from pre-school right through to adult education, the CIDTT programme is clearly providing a framework through which a candidate's teaching and learning skills, knowledge and understanding can be reliably assessed in any country and any context to a consistent standard.

Those candidates achieving distinction grades did so because they:

- took a coherent, appropriate and relevant approach in interacting with learners to facilitate effective learning and showed confidence to innovate in a realistic and resourceful manner
- analysed and reflected on their current and future practice with insight and discussed ways in which this has challenged and extended their own thinking
- evidenced innovation by trying approaches to teaching and learning not used before which developed new thinking and changes to their current practice
- evidenced a willingness to continually update their professional practice for the benefit of their learners
- consistently probed and questioned their own teaching practice and the ways in which their learners are learning
- used a wide variety of teaching and learning methods to enrich the experiences of their learners

Candidates who received a fail grade did so because they failed to satisfy the module performance and assignment requirements. Some of the reasons for this include:

- failing to evidence developments in their teaching practice to improve the quality of their learners' learning
- failing to focus on the three themes in Part B of the assignment which results in the Reflective Report lacking reflective analysis
- failing to submit all the evidence required for each Module as stipulated on Pages 7, 10 and 12 of the syllabus
- falling significantly short of the recommended word limit for each Step in Part A of the assignment and Part B the Reflective Report thereby failing to communicate sufficient range, depth and quality of the required evidence

Review of the 2010 Syllabus (8994)

A review of the 2010 CIDTT Syllabus was carried out by distributing an on-line questionnaire to Programme Leaders at 118 Centres approved to offer the programme. 38 or 32% of Centres responded, of whom 27 were using the new syllabus. Overall feedback on the syllabus changes is very positive and in particular respondents appreciate:

- how the new syllabus helps teachers to focus on their learners and learning
- the reduction in the number of performance criteria
- the design of the modules and how they are interlinked
- the design of the new assignment templates with clearer prompts

When asked to consider whether they agree with statements relating to the changes in the syllabus the following results were received and support the survey conclusions.

	Percentage of responses
With the reduction in performance criteria from 37 to 16 the 2010 syllabus is balanced, coherent and focused	58% of respondents Agree
The clarification of the prompts in Part A of the assignments help candidates to better explain their thinking and practice	52% of respondents Strongly Agree
The themes in Part B elicit reflective thinking and writing	52% of respondents Strongly Agree

Most of the Centres have had to make changes to their training programme in order to meet the requirements of the new syllabus. This is particularly the case for Module 3 where the focus is now on formative assessment. This has required many candidates, who were very summative assessment focused and driven, to have a better understanding of formative assessment concepts and skills and how to use them to support learning. One Centre highlighted how the focus on formative assessment differs from the culture in their country but did indicate how teachers were benefitting from the changes in their practice.

The new assignment templates have been well-received as they allow candidates to evidence the performance criteria more creatively stemming from their practice. Respondents indicate they find the CIDTT Guide to be a most useful resource. However, they also suggested further resources would be useful such as recommended textbooks, articles and websites. They also felt some sample assignments using the new templates would be useful.

Clearly the new 2010 syllabus has been well received. While training programmes have had to be changed to reflect the new syllabus the changes are positive as they encourage candidates to be more analytical when evaluating their professional practice. Some suggestions for future improvements made by Centres include:

- Broadening Module 2 so candidates have opportunities to deal with the 2 planned and observed sessions separately.
- Allowing evidence for formative assessment to be more exhaustive such as the possibility of submitting digital evidence.
- Development of a CIDTT online forum.
- Reviewing the prompts in Part A of the assignment templates as some are still confusing to some of the candidates. They should be further revised and made clearer taking in consideration the differences in culture/educational backgrounds and interpretations.

It was also pleasing to note that the on-line survey indicated the Centres find Examiners' feedback to be useful, with 48% finding it 'very useful'.

Centre Performance

The 2586 assignments in 2009/2010 were submitted from 59 different Centres with 85% in English and 15% in Spanish. Assignment pass rates indicate that the majority of Centres are providing appropriate learning programmes and levels of support which enable candidates to develop their professional practice and achieve. This also indicates that most Centre programmes consist of a balanced range of professional development activities designed to meet the needs of their candidates and their institution(s).

To further support candidates' learning and improve the number of pass and distinction grades awarded Centres should:

- only submit candidate assignments using the new CIDTT syllabus having developed their learning programmes to reflect the changes in the syllabus and recent developments in pedagogy, particularly with respect to formative assessment practices
- encourage candidates to carry out appropriate background reading and discussion with other teachers and/or mentors to help enrich their practice
- check that each candidate has conformed to all CIE assessment requirements before submitting assignments
- encourage candidates to submit assignments one by one so they can benefit from CIE's feedback and progress to the next module with confidence

Examiners advice to candidates

Examiners provide feedback on assignments to Centres and the following general points drawn from this feedback are worth noting before, during and when finalising assignment submissions:

- Make sure that you have completed the information on your assignment cover sheet fully and correctly. For example, your Unique Candidate Identifier is essential in order that CIE can accept your entry, and keep track of your progress in the Diploma.
- Present your own views, ideas, observations and reflections – your assignment is based on your practice and development. The examiners do not wish to read a general or theoretical 'essay'.
- You must be careful about making best use of words within the word limits. If you significantly fall short of the word limit you are likely to have problems communicating enough range, depth and quality of evidence. If you significantly exceed the word limit you are probably not going to be adding to the value of the evidence you have already provided and the examiner is not necessarily going to read the extra information.
- Do not use too many bullet points when responding to each of the key questions in Part A of the assignments. In Part B they should only be used for emphasis or to help make the evidence more concise and easier for the examiner to understand as it can inhibit analytical and creative thinking.
- If you are not sure about the meaning of specific terms in the syllabus e.g. *evaluation*, make sure you clarify these with your programme leader, trainers, tutor or mentor. Some words may appear to be similar in everyday life but in the educational context have a very specific meaning.
- Examiners do not mark the quality of your written language. You need to be fluent enough to express your ideas in ways which can be understood. If necessary ask a colleague, trainer or mentor to check a particular sentence or phrase to make sure that the meaning is clear.
- Submit assignments for assessment one by one so you can benefit from CIE's feedback to your Centre and then progress to the next Module with confidence.
- Make sure you proof read your assignment before submission and check for any formatting problems.

The following advice is specific to each Module and whilst not exhaustive is based on feedback to Centres who submitted assignments using the new 2010 Diploma syllabus.

Module 1 – candidates should:

- ensure the Programme Plan evidences at least 10 hours of contact time over several sessions with at least 5 learners who will be the same learner group across all four modules.
- indicate in the programme plan the range of learning activities they plan to use (not in detail) rather than simply producing a topic precedence list
- know the difference between assessment and evaluation and how to plan for each so it is evidenced in the programme plan

- submit two session plans that evidence contrasting sessions in which active learning is at the forefront of one or preferably both lessons
- ensure session plans have clear aims and objectives and structured so they have an introduction that links back to previous learning and end with a conclusion that reviews the learning taken place
- be prepared to take 'risks' and try different approaches to teaching and learning they don't normally use such as inductive rather than the more traditional deductive methods
- evidence how they are planning for differentiated learning through task design as well as through the management of groups
- address all three themes in Part B the Reflective Report

Module 2 – candidates should:

- brief the Observer for each of the two lessons to provide critically constructive feedback on learning as well as teaching so it can be used for reflection that is analytical rather than purely descriptive, and of course submit copies of both feedbacks
- include a summary of learner feedback using the CIE Learner Feedback form for each of the observed sessions
- use inductive as well as deductive approaches which help to promote more experiential student-centred learning
- ensure active learning is at the forefront of their practice so even when a stage in the lesson is teacher-led the learners are required to think and make connections with their existing knowledge, skills and understanding
- pay attention to the concept of learning and evidence how it has been differentiated to meet the needs of the learners through task design
- evidence how they know whether or not learning has taken place and what methods they used at different stages of the lesson to review their learners' progress
- evidence how formative assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and how they are trying different or new approaches

Module 3 – candidates should:

- ensure they have designed the submitted sample formative assessment task together with a marking scheme or similar grading/feedback criteria
- submit three examples of assessed student work with feedback using the task and marking scheme they have designed
- evidence how the formative and summative assessment you have designed is valid, realistic and workable
- ensure the focus of the Reflective Report is on formative assessment by responding to all three themes which considers past, present and future practice

Module 4 – candidates should:

- be careful not to confuse evaluation with assessment
- in 4.1 focus on evaluating and improving the programme plan and not their own practice, which is considered in 4.2
- ensure the professional development plan reflects the improvements you want to make to help your learners learn as well as develop your own teaching skills and practice
- ensure the reflections in Part B address all three themes so the critical issues encountered in carrying out on-going evaluation of learning and your own practice are identified and then analysed to develop future practice
- in Part B look back and reflect on the whole Diploma experience and relate it to Kolb's learning cycle as it should put the four CIDTT Modules into context

Summary

The introduction of the 2010 CIDTT syllabus has been very positive and submitted assignments using the new scheme have evidenced candidates being far more analytical and creative in their thinking and reflective practice. The CIDTT programme presents opportunities for candidates to research new ideas and develop fresh approaches to teaching and learning in the professional work environment. Therefore CIE Centres should encourage and support candidates, no matter what their experience as a teacher, to be innovative in their practice so they extend and develop their professional skills, knowledge and understanding to help their learners learn. This means the candidates must be prepared to take 'risks' and try more active student-centred approaches to teaching and learning not previously used to enrich their learners' learning experiences.

Centres using the updated 2010 syllabus have had to re-design their learning programmes, particularly with respect to Module 3 and its focus on formative assessment. Generally this change has been well received by Centres and candidates. However, it is acknowledged that the format for submitting a sample formative assessment task, designed by the candidate together with a marking scheme and three examples of assessed student work, does have to be flexible in its approach to allow for the wide range of contexts in which candidates are formatively assessing their learners.

All CIE Centres should have now implemented the updated 2010 CIDTT syllabus and only be submitting candidate assignments, no matter what stage they are at in the programme, using the new assignment templates. The syllabus re-design, with fewer but more coherent performance criteria together with clearer key question prompts in the assignment templates, is enabling candidates to gather, organise and present relevant evidence more effectively to reflect their professional practice.

Finally and on a sad note I'm certain that everybody associated with the CIDTT programme would want to acknowledge the contribution made by Bob Burkill who was the Chief Examiner and lead architect of this scheme who tragically died last February. Without his leadership, imagination, passion, knowledge and skills this qualification would not exist as it does today. Many teachers around the world benefitted from his support and enthusiasm for teaching and learning and he helped to change their lives forever. He will be greatly missed by all at CIE.



Bob Burkill