

# Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (English Language) 2004 (March)

## Assessment Report

### Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to consolidate the Chief Examiners' observations of the performance of candidates who sat the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (English Language) 2004 (March).

### General Observation

2. Candidates achieved different *proficiency attainment*\* rates in different papers. The proficiency attainment rates for individual papers were: Reading, 71%; Writing, 40%; Listening, 49%; Speaking, 47%; and Classroom Language Assessment, 88%.

### Paper 1: Reading

3. This paper consists of two parts, namely Part 1: Multiple-choice Cloze and Part 2: Reading Comprehension. The attainment rate of the 2177 candidates who attempted this paper was 71%.

There was less evidence than in previous administrations of candidates not finding time to finish the paper, with most questions attempted by the majority of candidates. However, in some answer scripts, the scores in Part 1 (Multiple-choice Cloze) and Part 2 (Reading Comprehension) were not balanced, with evidence that those candidates had spent an inordinate amount of time on one or other of the two Parts.

### *Part 1: Multiple Choice Cloze*

4. On average, candidates performed equally well on each of the two cloze passages. The topic of the second passage, globalisation, was selected to broaden the range of content in the assessment. Candidates can expect such broadening of topics to continue in future papers, in either or both Parts. Candidates performed most strongly in items calling for the selection of verb tense or form and in the selection of appropriate vocabulary items. They were less successful in selecting appropriate ways of linking clauses or completing idea relationship statements (e.g. 'nature walks *where* students will be encouraged to enjoy and evaluate the environment around them ...).

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\* Scoring Level 3 or above in the Reading and Listening papers, and Level 2.5 or above on any one scale and Level 3 or above on all other scales in the Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment (CLA) papers.

## ***Part 2: Reading Comprehension***

5. As noted earlier, most questions in both passages were attempted by all candidates. There was, however, some evidence of candidates running out of time in Passage B, with some responses missing or insufficiently developed. Overall, candidates continued to show less strength in responding to questions about global meaning or asking for an understanding or interpretation of the writer's viewpoint. Some points to note concerning candidates' performance in this section are as follows:
  - 5.1 Candidates generally performed well on questions requiring specific referencing (e.g. Who does 'they' refer to?) or the retrieval of specific information (e.g. What do students find less useful than grammar?). Most candidates produced correct answers for the multiple choice items about the meaning of 'needless to say' in Passage A (question 6) but were less successful in selecting the meaning of 'how does all this connect' in Passage B (question 21). Most candidates were able to complete the table in Passage B (question 16) with appropriate information.
  - 5.2 However, there was some evidence of candidates not reading the questions carefully so as to understand what was required. For example, again in question 16 in Passage B, the line reference is given in the question to help candidates locate the necessary information. Some candidates appeared to have ignored that line reference and in their responses produced incorrect information from much further along in the passage.
  - 5.3 Where questions had two parts – for example, question 19 in Passage B, 'which is easier' and 'give two phrases to support', some candidates neglected to respond to the first part of the question.
  - 5.4 There was limited evidence of indiscriminate copying, but some candidates lost marks by including words or expressions from the passage that did not make sense in a response to the question asked. Candidates who performed strongly were able to select information appropriately, omitting language that was not relevant to the answer.
  - 5.5 Questions on global understanding, and those asking for inference or an understanding of the writer's viewpoint, were inconsistently handled by candidates. The challenge appears to be that of reading for overall meaning in the passages, not just for the understanding of specific parts or the meanings of particular expressions.
6. Candidates should note the following advice:
  - 6.1 Candidates are encouraged to believe and act on what they tell their own students and what is clear from research into reading: reading for pleasure in English will benefit overall English language skills development. Candidates should in addition read articles, journals, magazines, book reviews and books to familiarise themselves with the vocabulary and style of writing within their profession.

- 6.2 Candidates are encouraged to approach an examination as an opportunity to demonstrate overall capability in the use of English. They should use the reading strategies with which they are familiar and that serve them well generally – scanning passages to understand the type of material and context, skimming to find specific information, guessing unfamiliar words or expressions from the context, and using key words to help determine overall meaning and the writer’s point of view.
- 6.3 In Part 1 – Multiple-choice Cloze – candidates may find it helpful to read the passages before attempting answers, so as to get a feel for the way a sentence or part of the passage will most likely develop.
- 6.4 In Part 2 – Reading Comprehension – candidates should scan the questions and read through the passage quickly before reading more closely to attempt each question. Candidates should then take the time to read the questions carefully so as to understand clearly what is required.
- 6.5 Candidates should understand that responses must be based on information that is in the passages, not information that they have gained from their own experience or that is based on their own assumptions. The questions in the paper will always relate directly to the passages and the information or points of view that are expressed by the writers.
- 6.6 Candidates should aim to be precise in their answers so that their meaning is clear.

## **Paper 2: Writing**

7. This paper consists of two parts, namely, Part 1: Task 1, Expository Writing, and Part 2: Tasks 2A & 2B, Correcting and Explaining Errors/Problems in a Student’s Composition. Candidates are tested on five scales of performance, namely, (a) Organisation and Coherence, (b) Grammatical Accuracy, (c) Task Completion, (d) Correcting Errors/Problems, and (e) Explaining Errors/Problems. Descriptors of each scale are set out in the Syllabus Specifications published in November 2000. The proficiency attainment rate of the 2727 candidates who attempted this paper was 40%.

### ***Part 1: Expository Writing***

8. The topic for the expository writing was ways in which teachers can handle stress to avoid being burnt-out. Generally, markers felt that it was a suitable topic and an issue which relates closely to teachers. A number of candidates, however, described their daily encounters of stress rather than discussed methods to de-stress. The task clearly required candidates to supply one idea of their own in addition to those included in the task prompt, but some candidates failed to include personal ideas. For their own cognitive development and that of their students, candidates are advised to practise generating and developing content more often.

9. On the whole, there did not seem to be many serious problems with Organisation and Coherence, except that some texts sounded very repetitious. Grammatical Accuracy, however, remains a severe problem. The following are some of the most frequently recurring errors:
- Inconsistent use of tenses
  - Subject-verb disagreement
  - Wrong word form, e.g. ‘balance live’ (instead of ‘balanced life’), ‘detail plan’ (instead of ‘detailed plan’)
  - Incorrect choice of adjective, e.g. ‘stressful’ or ‘stressed’
  - Incomplete sentences
  - Misused discourse markers, e.g. ‘on the other hand’ (instead of ‘in addition’)
  - Confusing complex structures
  - Incorrect spelling, e.g. ‘colleges’ (instead of ‘colleagues’), ‘weather’ (instead of ‘whether’)
  - Inappropriately-formed passive voice structures
  - Unnecessary double subjects
10. Candidates are advised to:
- 10.1 Make sure they read the task instructions carefully.
- 10.2 Improve their language accuracy through such methods as self-access learning or taking language courses.
- 10.3 Spend more time reading English so as to increase their vocabulary
- 10.4 Practise their writing.

***Part 2: Correcting and explaining errors/problems***

11. It is of the markers’ opinion that the level of difficulty of Part 2 was well controlled, and the SARS context was appropriate and authentic. The test items covered a variety of grammatical points to examine the candidates’ understanding of recurring errors of Hong Kong learners. As such, Part 2 tested the candidates’ ability to identify and explain common syntactic and semantic errors, and managed to discriminate candidates’ performance well.
12. Candidates generally did better in Task 2A where they had to identify and correct common errors, which markers felt should be within the ability of school language teachers.
13. Candidates are reminded that the rubric for Task 2B requests them *to explain the error(s)/problem(s)* and demonstrate their *understanding of the underlying rules or generalisations, using grammatical terms where appropriate*. In other words, if the problem is with the subject/verb/noun of the sentence, it is not enough to point out that the ‘word’ is wrong; it is necessary to state that the ‘subject/verb/noun’ is wrong.

14. Points regarding candidates' performance are listed below.

14.1 Description of the correction made without explanation, for example:

(3) Then my Mum made me work hardly

A number of candidates wrote: 'Should be work hard, not hardly.' This answer would score no marks as no explanation of the error is given. A suitable explanation of the error would be:

'The problem is the wrong choice of adverb. The writer has used the adverb "hardly", which means "not much". Instead, the writer should have used another adverb, "hard", which means "diligently".

(9) My teacher is very kind and pleasure

Some candidates wrote: 'Pleasure is wrong, pleasant is right.' Again, this would score no marks. Candidates need to identify the error and explain how it should be corrected, i.e.:

'The problem is one of part of speech. The writer has incorrectly used the noun form "pleasure". Instead, the writer should have used the adjective form "pleasant" to describe the teacher's personality.

14.2 Wrong identification of error, for example:

(10) we hopes it will never happen again.

Some candidates incorrectly described this as a tense problem when it is in fact a subject-verb agreement error.

(4) she made me to read my books

Some candidates thought that this is a preposition mistake and that 'the preposition "to" should be deleted'. The correct answer is that 'the verb "make" should be followed by a bare infinitive'.

14.3 Failure to detect the problem, for example:

(3) Then my Mum made me work hardly

Many candidates wrote that 'hardly is an adverb but an adjective should be used after work'. They failed to recognise that instead of a word form error, there is a wrong use of adverb here. The word 'hard', which is the word that should be used in this case, is acting as an adverb and not as an adjective.

14.4 Ambiguous answers, for example:

(9) My teacher is very kind and pleasure

In their attempt to explain why pleasure is inappropriate, a number of candidates wrote that ‘the adjective pleasure is wrong and does not fit the context’. In fact, ‘pleasure’ is a noun.

14.5 Incomplete explanations, for example:

(7) We had to wash our hands when we got back home with soap.

It is insufficient to say that ‘with soap’ should follow ‘hands’ as it modifies ‘hands’. Such answers only scored partial credit as ‘with soap’ does not modify the object ‘hands’, rather it modifies the action verb ‘wash’.

14.6 Explanations that are full of language errors and spelling mistakes, for example:

(4) she made me to read my books

A few candidates wrote that ‘the verb to make follows a bare infinitive’ (instead of ‘the verb to make should be followed by a bare infinitive’).

14.7 Correct identification but wrong explanation of the error, for example:

(10) we hopes it will never happen again.

A number of candidates successfully identified this as a disagreement between the subject (‘we’) and the verb (‘hopes’), but they either said that ‘we’ is a second- or third-person plural, or ‘hopes’ is a plural verb or first-person singular. Only partial credit can be gained for such answers. A complete explanation would be:

The problem here is one of subject-verb agreement. The verb “hope” should be in first-person plural form to agree with the subject “we”.’

(11) What the weather is like in New Zealand now?

Many candidates realised that the word order is incorrect; but in their explanation, they asserted that the verb always comes immediately after ‘what’ in a direct question, which is not true. A full explanation would be:

‘The problem in this sentence concerns word order. The writer needs to invert the subject “the weather” and the verb “is” in the question form.’

15. Candidates are reminded to follow the instructions carefully. Some candidates either put their answers to the two tasks together or explained all the errors instead of those designated. This caused difficulties in marking.

16. It should also be made clear that the explanations that candidates provide should be addressed to the examiners and should be worded in a similar way to the examples given on the question paper, in the Guidance Notes for Candidates and in this and previous reports.

17. The problems exhibited in the answers given in Task 2B indicate that there is a great need for many pre- and in-service teachers to strengthen their foundation in English language, including lexis, syntax and semantics. Otherwise, students will likely be taught wrong structures and usage, and be given inappropriate or inaccurate explanations that cannot help them differentiate between correct and wrong use of English.

### **Paper 3: Listening**

18. The paper was based on an interview with two language educators who were discussing a host of issues relating to language immersion programmes for language teachers as well as non-language teachers in Hong Kong schools. The discussion started with a trace of how the two interviewees began their personal involvement in the management of an immersion programme in a tertiary institution in Hong Kong. It then moved to an account of the purposes and features of this language immersion programme. The interviewees then compared this particular programme with other possible modes of language immersion, and argued that a short-term immersion programme such as this one had certain advantages over long-term ones. Towards the end of the interview, the two discussants explored the close links between language and culture, drawing on their observations of participants' general behaviour patterns, and enumerated the specific ways an immersion programme can benefit language teachers in Hong Kong.
19. Altogether four speakers participated in the interview. The two interviewees (language educators) were English native speakers, one female and one male. One of the two interviewers was a male native speaker of English. The female interviewer was a native speaker of Chinese. Although there were four voices in the conversation, their voices and accents were very distinct and easily identified. Careful consideration was given to ensure that there was time for the audience to get used to the four voices.
20. A wide range of listening tasks was employed, including blank-filling, table-completion, listen-and-check, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. These made it possible to test a variety of micro listening skills. The recording was delivered at a natural, normal speed in standard accents (native English speakers and Hong Kong Chinese second language English speakers).
21. A total of 2268 candidates took this paper with 49% of candidates obtaining a Level 3 or above (Language Proficiency Requirement).
22. Points regarding candidates' performance are listed below.
  - 22.1 Some candidates did not demonstrate sufficient ability to listen to colloquial English. An example of this is Question 10:

‘What made Victor become more interested in the immersion programmes?’

The answer to this question should be ‘Victor did some monitoring visits.’

The relevant part of the transcript is as follows:

*And I did a couple of monitoring visits, which we can perhaps talk about later, and as a result of that, sort of became personally hooked on it.*

We believe that ‘as a result of this’ is a very strong cue for linking the monitoring visits, as a cause, to Victor’s personal interest in the immersion programmes. It is quite possible, however, that some candidates did not recognise the colloquial term ‘became personally hooked on it’, and therefore failed to get the answer.

- 22.2 Another question that required knowledge of colloquial English was Question 25(ii), when Victor admitted that he did not know how a conflict could be resolved. The question of this item reads:

‘Can this issue be resolved?’ And the correct answer is ‘Victor does not know.’

This is the excerpt which contains the answer:

*But when they come back they’re used to making up their own minds and deciding what they want to do, and sometimes, some fathers in particular, find this a bit of an issue. And I’m not entirely sure how happily it gets resolved in the end.*

Many candidates were unable to identify the phrase which gives the answer, i.e. ‘not entirely sure’ and were perhaps expecting there to be a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to this question.

- 22.3 To be able to infer meaning of a language item or structure from the context is another important listening skill. An example that tests this skill is Question 23, which asks the meaning of the term ‘empty nester’, a term Catherine used to refer to parents who took immersion participants into their families because (i) their own child or children had already left home and (ii) they had available space or bedrooms for the immersion participants. Quite a few candidates could not show that they could infer the meaning of the term from its linguistic context, which is given below:

*So many of them if asked about why they take in students ... typically their own children are either young and would benefit from exposure to another culture, or they’re empty nesters, so their kids have left, they have this biggish house, empty bedrooms, and they would welcome having a young person in their homes.*

The words after ‘they’re empty nesters, so ...’ explains the term ‘empty nesters’ preceding it. Some candidates failed to pick up on this and might have tried to guess the answer, thereby only getting one part of the answer. Both parts were necessary to gain the mark.

- 22.4 Another weakness some candidates showed in this paper is that they relied only on a top-down processing, and failed to attend to details. Question 9 (v) is



one such example. This item required candidates to write down the size of the groups of participants in the immersion programme. The relevant excerpt of the text is:

*... and we try to have a maximum group size of 15 and not have the same type of groups in the same centers*

The correct answer is 'a maximum of 15' or 'up to 15' but many candidates did not pick up the word 'maximum' and '15' as the answer. The difference is only one word ('maximum') but the meaning intended by the speaker is obviously very different. Candidates need to be very aware of this kind of textual difference because in real life failure to interpret such details can cause communication errors.

23. Advice to candidates taking this paper is given below.
- 23.1 It is very important to read the questions very carefully during the pause period, and even try to provide a tentative answer.
  - 23.2 Candidates should definitely try to maintain a relatively high degree of exposure to authentic English outside the classroom. This should include a wide variety of genres, accents and speeds.
  - 23.3 It is also important to understand that listening ability can only be tested indirectly, and purposeful authentic listening in an informal or semiformal setting is often accompanied by a meaningful social act. In listening tests, this response is in writing, and hence being able to write a response to what one has listened to is crucial to the demonstration of one's listening abilities. This special skill needs to be practised and candidates should take every opportunity to do so.
  - 23.4 Candidates should note that during the listening test they must **switch off their mobile phone**. Even when set to silent or vibration mode, the signal can interfere with the broadcast of the recording. This will affect the performance of both the candidate him/herself as well as other candidates. Any candidate failing to abide by this rule will be liable to incur a severe mark penalty.

#### **Paper 4: Speaking**

24. This paper consists of two parts. There are three tasks in Part 1, namely, Task 1A: Reading Aloud a Prose Passage, Task 1B: Reading Aloud a Poem and Task 1C: Telling a Story/Recounting an Experience/Presenting Arguments; and one task in Part 2, namely, Group Interaction.

Candidates are tested on six scales of performance, namely, (a) Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation; (b) Reading Aloud with Meaning; (c) Grammatical Accuracy; (d) Organisation and Cohesion; (e) Interacting with Peers; and (f) Explaining Language

Matters to Peers. Descriptors of each scale are set out in the Syllabus Specifications published in November 2000.

The proficiency attainment rate of the 2421 candidates who attempted this paper was 47%.

*Part 1: Tasks 1A, 1B and 1C*

25. The following are specific comments on Part 1 of the speaking assessment:
- 25.1 In this part of the paper, assessors observed that candidates performed best in Task 1C (i.e. Telling a Story/Recounting an Experience/Presenting Arguments), followed by Task 1A (i.e. Reading Aloud a Prose Passage) and Task 1B (i.e. Reading Aloud a Poem).
  - 25.2 The major weakness of candidates in Part 1 was found in ‘Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation’ when reading aloud the prose passage and the poem, with stress and intonation a particular problem for many. It is recommended that prospective candidates spend time reading suitable English texts and listening to the ways that such texts are read aloud by competent speakers. Candidates also need to think more about the audience that they are meant to be speaking to, i.e. a class of students, and try to project the meaning of the poem or prose to that audience through appropriate stress and phrasing.
  - 25.3 In general, Task 1C was carried out well by most candidates, who were able to talk on the given topic for the time required. A small minority of candidates did appear to read from a ‘script’ that they had prepared during the preparation time. Such candidates were marked down for this as the assessors usually found that once the candidate had completed their ‘reading’, they had nothing else to say, or what they did say either repeated what they had said already or even contradicted it, making the whole ‘monologue’ incoherent. Candidates are advised to make brief notes during the preparation time and to work from these, such that their talk has a clear structure and is relevant to the topic. Candidates should try to present different aspects of the topic to demonstrate to the assessors that they are able to organise their thoughts and present them coherently. Candidates should talk for about 2 minutes and will be told by the assessors when to stop their presentation.
  - 25.4 Assessors also found that many candidates demonstrated a poor control of grammatical structures and so were unable to score highly on ‘Grammatical Accuracy’ when performing their presentation in Task 1C. Assessors are looking for the ability of candidates to use a range of grammatical structures accurately. Again, more exposure to English in the form of reading would help instill in candidates a firm grasp of grammar.

## *Part 2: Group Interaction*

26. For Part 2, Group Interaction, candidates should note the following:
- 26.1 In Part 2 of the paper, candidates were able to make use of conversational strategies; hence, on the whole they did quite well in this part of the paper, especially on the scale of Interacting with Peers. A weakness observed was the use of incorrect grammatical terms and/or erroneous grammatical explanations. Candidates should try to become more familiar with basic grammatical terminology so that they are able to identify errors.
  - 26.2 In a number of cases, candidates talked about certain categories of errors that did not feature in the text. This would indicate that they had rehearsed a 'speech' prior to the assessment. In such cases candidates were marked down on Explaining Language Matters to Peers, as they had not shown an ability to discuss the errors in the text provided.
  - 26.3 Another weakness of some candidates in the group interaction was the tendency to talk about irrelevant matters such as the characteristics of their own students or problems with the education system. This showed an inability to interact with peers, which should involve not only speaking to others but listening to them and responding appropriately. Again, candidates should prepare for this part of the assessment by practising speaking in English with colleagues rather than memorising sections of speech in advance.
27. Candidates should understand that the nature of the speaking test is that the candidate's performance at the time of the assessment is the one that is taken into account. Whilst there should be some degree of correlation between the ability shown by each candidate on the different components of the LPATE, such as Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment, it does not follow that a candidate will automatically score the same on each test, or on similar scales across the different tests.
28. As the speaking test is not recorded, there is no opportunity for candidates to appeal against their result after the announcement of results, other than to have their scoresheets checked for technical errors. If candidates consider that they may have been unfairly assessed for any reason, they should report to the Chief Examiner on duty at the Assessment Centre immediately.

## **Paper 5: Classroom Language Assessment**

29. Classroom Language Assessment started in late January and was completed in May 2004. Such an extensive period was required as the number of candidates taking this paper indicated a significant surge of about 2.7 times as compared with the previous administration of September 2003. Out of the 1923 candidates assessed, 88% attained Level 3 or above in all the four scales of Grammatical Accuracy; Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation; Language of Interaction; and Language of Instruction.

30. The majority of the candidates demonstrated an acceptable level of language proficiency in the lessons observed. Some in fact achieved a very high standard in both accuracy and fluency and displayed a good level of confidence and competence. Comments on the individual areas of assessment are given below.
31. Grammatical accuracy:
- 31.1 The ability to instantly recognise a simple mistake and to self-correct was evident among many candidates, such as correction of subject-verb agreement and tense errors.
- 31.2 Structural errors at a deeper level and problems with usage proved far more difficult, however. These errors very often showed obvious signs of L1 interference. A number of candidates, for instance, confused 'hear' with 'listen to', and 'see' with 'look at', both typical errors commonly made in Hong Kong. This problem was also exhibited at the sentence level. Examples such as 'Why laughing?' 'No problem?' and 'You back home think about it', show the use of Chinese sentence structure applied (incorrectly) to English expression.
- 31.3 In addition to accuracy, the range of vocabulary, the ability to handle elaborate and complex sentences, and the appropriate and natural use of idiomatic and colloquial expressions are just as important. Quite a number of teachers, despite maintaining a reasonable degree of accuracy, often struggled to find the right expression. Candidates are advised to look further than grammatical accuracy to acquire a broader range of communication tools to give their language better precision.
32. Pronunciation, stress and intonation:
- 32.1 Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable level of accuracy in terms of pronunciation. However, particular attention still needs to be paid to the pronunciation of final consonants. This problem manifested itself in children repeating such phrases as 'to pose [post] a letter', 'to die [dial] a number', 'a glass of milk [milk]', 'a bowl [bowl] of rice'. In such cases the teachers were not providing a satisfactory model of the spoken language.
- 32.2 Other typical pronunciation problems remained a concern among weaker candidates leading to communication being impeded as teachers failed to articulate or distinguish certain sounds. Examples of typical consonant errors were: 'Santa Cross' for 'Santa Claus'; 'Sue' instead of 'shoe'; 'French flies' instead of 'fries'; and the cows would be eating 'glass' [grass]. Far from being comical, such errors bring confusion into the classroom and can lead to the perpetuation of errors.
- 32.3 Candidates should try to practise speaking more and if necessary refer to a dictionary of pronunciation, such as those available on CD or online. In addition, candidates should be more conscious of the many natural speech phenomena that give English its uniqueness. Aspects like stress, intonation, and rhythm contribute just as significantly to the overall effectiveness of

communication. Working on understanding the linking of sounds is therefore no less important than distinguishing phonemes.

33. Language of interaction:

33.1 Interaction is one prime channel for teachers to offer positive reinforcement to their students. From motivation to correction, the ability of the teacher to truly communicate can greatly influence the students' achievements.

33.2 Though generally acceptable, the kind of interaction witnessed in many classrooms tended to be mechanical and minimal. Responses given by the teachers were usually routine and limited and there was little flexibility and spontaneity in the language used. Reaction to students' answers in the form of confirmation, correction and encouragement was often predictable at best, and in some cases simply inadequate and ineffectual. Some examples of overused expressions included, 'good', 'well-done' and 'what else?' Teachers might try to vary their expressions to give their language a fresher appeal.

34. Language of instruction:

34.1 Most candidates were able to give clear instruction and explanation in language appropriate to the level of their students, with some candidates displaying great ease even when speaking at length, as when elaboration was required. However, the general impression among the assessors has been that some of the lessons showed strong signs of rehearsal, a fact readily revealed in the rather dramatic oscillation between the smoothness of memorised utterances and the awkwardness of unscripted speeches.

34.2 In some cases, clarity of instruction was affected by the use of inappropriate expressions. To be told to 'keep quiet' right after being given the '1, 2, 3, Go' signal, for instance, proved confusing to a class of students who had no idea whether they were to start or stop their discussions. A more appropriate expression, such as 'do not shout' to replace 'keep quiet', would have helped to avoid the ambiguity in this case.

35. As a final piece of advice: future candidates are urged to ensure that they are at all times clearly audible during the assessment and that the amount of teacher talk is sufficient for a fair assessment. They are also reminded that an appropriate display of variety and complexity in the language used will always be to their credit. Lessons consisting largely of repetition of a few recycled phrases, or in which the teacher merely patrols the classroom playing a predominantly supervisory role, do not suffice.

36. A note of thanks is due to both teachers and schools for their assistance in facilitating the assessments.

- END -