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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook gives an overview of the Classroom Language Assessment (English Language) (CLAE) for candidates, administrators and other users. It outlines the key features of the CLAE as administered from the 2024/25 school year onwards.

Objective

The objective of the CLAE is to provide an objective reference against which the classroom language proficiency of primary/secondary English teachers can be gauged.

The CLAE

The CLAE is a standards-referenced assessment in which the same set of scales and descriptors as well as criteria for determining grades are applied to all candidates, i.e. candidates are not compared against each other.

Candidates must satisfy the entry requirements and comply with the registration and payment requirements stated in the “Notes for Persons Entering for the Assessment” for the stipulated school year, as accessible on the Education Bureau (EDB) website (www.edb.gov.hk/cla).

Participating candidates are assessed in their use of classroom language. Please refer to the respective sections for details on the requirements of the CLAE, the assessment procedures, and the specific language skill areas to be assessed.

Proficiency Levels

In the assessment of classroom language, the assessors use scales and descriptors. The assessment of performance involves the use of more than one scale. When using a scale, an assessor will award, based on the performance of a candidate, a number from 1 to 5, indicating the ability level demonstrated on a scale. Level 5 is the highest proficiency level a candidate can attain on a scale, and Level 1 the lowest. A candidate is considered to have reached the required level of proficiency if he or she has attained **Level 3 or above on at least three scales** and **Level 2.5 or above on at most one scale**. As some candidates would be assessed by two assessors in a paired visit, it is possible for a non-integer score (e.g. ‘2.5’) to be awarded on any scale(s) because the proficiency level awarded is the average of the grades from the two assessors.

CLASSROOM LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

General Description

Format	The Classroom Language Assessment consists of lesson observation and takes place in the classroom.
Timing	Each Classroom Language Assessment visit lasts for a single period. On the day of the visit, the candidate briefs the assessor before the lesson takes place. The briefing includes information on the lesson to be observed and students' previous language learning. The briefing takes about 5 minutes and is not assessed. Allowance is given for the teacher and the class to settle down at the start of the lesson, but a continuous period of 20 minutes' teaching is a minimum requirement.
Arrangement	Candidates are assessed once with some of them receiving a paired visit in which two assessors observe the same period in order to check on the actual attainment of various Classroom Language Assessment standards.
Assessment	The Classroom Language Assessment assesses language ability and teaching effectiveness strictly relevant to the use of functional language, not teaching methodology. This means that the teaching methods and techniques used by the teacher and the teacher's own classroom practices and personality are not an issue.
Marks	Scales and descriptors are used to judge performance.

Advice to Candidates

Candidates should take note of the following points:

- When submitting an application, a candidate should produce full and detailed information regarding his/her teaching timetable and the school calendar, and any subsequent changes should be promptly reported.
- A minimum of 5 days' notice prior to a visit is normally given by an assessor to a candidate. Candidates should contact the Language Teacher Qualifications Team of the Education Bureau within the assessment period if they have any questions.
- Candidates should ensure that the lesson to be assessed is conducted in English as far as possible. The use of Cantonese is not encouraged and, if it is judged to be unnecessary, will adversely affect the assessment.
- Candidates are required to organise their lessons in such a way that all the skills required can be demonstrated.

A Table illustrating the Four Scales that make up the Classroom Language Assessment

CLASSROOM LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT	
Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range	<i>Accuracy</i> <i>Variety and complexity</i> <i>Appropriateness</i>
Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation	<i>Accuracy and clarity</i> <i>Appropriateness and naturalness</i> <i>Comprehensibility</i>
The Language of Interaction	<i>Eliciting</i> <i>Responding</i> <i>Providing feedback</i>
The Language of Instruction	<i>Presenting</i> <i>Giving instructions</i> <i>Signalling</i>

Performance Descriptors: Classroom Language Assessment ¹

The following descriptors indicate what candidates are expected to be able to do at each level.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 5 | <p>Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range Always able to use an appropriate range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately.</p> <p>Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation Speaks in a fully comprehensible way with no systematic errors in pronunciation and uses stress and intonation in a very natural way to convey meaning.</p> <p>The Language of Interaction Maintains very smooth interaction with students using a wide range of effective and appropriate language which is well suited to the language abilities of students and provides timely and very specific feedback to students, wherever opportunities arise.</p> <p>The Language of Instruction Presents and explains lesson content clearly and naturally and provides clear instructions. Uses very precise instructional language which is always well suited to the language abilities of students.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range Uses an appropriate range of grammatical structures and vocabulary mostly accurately.</p> <p>Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation Speaks in a comprehensible way with few systematic errors in pronunciation and uses stress and intonation in a mostly natural way to convey meaning.</p> <p>The Language of Interaction Usually maintains smooth interaction with students using a good range of effective and appropriate language which is suited to the language abilities of students and provides timely and specific feedback to students most of the time.</p> <p>The Language of Instruction Usually presents and explains lesson content clearly and naturally and provides clear instructions. Uses precise instructional language which is suited to the language abilities of students.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range Uses a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary generally accurately, though with occasional errors.</p> <p>Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation Speaks in a generally comprehensible way, though may make errors in pronunciation. Uses stress and intonation to convey meaning, though may occasionally sound unnatural.</p> <p>The Language of Interaction Generally able to interact with students using appropriate language, though not always suited to the language abilities of students with some evidence of providing feedback to students, but not always timely and specific.</p> <p>The Language of Instruction Usually presents and explains lesson content and provides instructions effectively, though may at times sound repetitive and unnatural. Uses generally precise instructional language, though not always suited to the language abilities of students.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range The range of grammatical structures used is limited and consistently inaccurate. Vocabulary is limited.</p> <p>Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation Does not speak in a consistently comprehensible way due to errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation and speech is frequently hesitant.</p> <p>The Language of Interaction Does not interact with students effectively due to limited appropriate language, and does not address communication breakdown with ease nor with suitable feedback.</p> <p>The Language of Instruction Often does not present or explain lesson content or provide instructions effectively, and does not use acceptable metalanguage in explanations/ presentations when required.</p> |
| 1 | <p>Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range A very limited range of grammatical structures and vocabulary is used. Fails to convey meaning due to frequent grammatical errors.</p> <p>Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation Makes frequent errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation which cause confusion.</p> <p>The Language of Interaction Does not interact with students due to a lack of appropriate language with no feedback or with unintelligible or clumsily delivered feedback.</p> <p>The Language of Instruction Fails to present or explain lesson content or provide instructions effectively, and hardly uses any metalanguage in explanations/ presentations when required.</p> |

¹ The descriptors are for illustrative purposes to help candidates to grasp the skills required at each level. They are a simplified version of the scales and descriptors used by assessors in the assessment of performance in the Classroom Language Assessment.