

Chapter 11

The CUHK LPATE Training Courses: Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language



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Abstract This chapter focuses on the Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment modules—the three areas that are assessed by scales and descriptors in the LPATE. The scales and descriptors adopted in each LPATE paper, namely Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment, are first introduced, followed by a presentation of tasks that were used in different modules. This chapter focuses on how these tasks aided the development of the scales assessed in the LPATE, thus helping participants meet the LPR. From a wider perspective, this chapter describes how an enhanced grasp of the Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment modules may contribute to teacher professional development.

Introduction

The Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment papers in the LPATE assess candidates' production of written and oral language. The three tests are assessed by scales and descriptors which are central to competence in writing, speaking and teaching English through English in classrooms. It should be noted that although all sections of the Writing Module were criterion-referenced and assessed by means of scales and descriptors during the period described in this section, the LPATE revisions of 2006 amended the scoring patterns of the Writing Module in the changes that were made to the module and its assessment. Some forms of analytical marking were introduced in the revision process and promulgated once the revised version was implemented. These changes are described more fully by Urmston and by Drave in Section III.

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As stated, the current section focuses on three modules—Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment. Tasks on the three modules are presented, and attention has been paid to show how these tasks enabled participants to enhance their language proficiency, as well as to satisfying the LPR as stated in the relevant scales of the Government’s LPATE handbook (Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration, 2000).

Assessing Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language—Scales, Descriptors and Levels

Developing scales and descriptors for language assessment is a development in language assessment, motivated by a need to produce more transparent and communicable test results than a numerical score (Hudson, 2005). Scales and descriptors are used in various criterion-referenced benchmark language tests, such as the Canadian Language Benchmark and the Common European Framework (Hudson, 2005). Scales and descriptors are helpful to both raters and language learners. Rating scales can facilitate raters to make evaluation decisions in a more reliable and manageable manner by providing raters with categorisations that raters can use (Lumley, 2002). Scales and descriptors are also helpful for curriculum design by offering a scaled summary of qualitative aspects of language use (Little, 2005).

Scales and descriptors vary according to aspects of language skills that are assessed (e.g. assessment of writing versus assessment of vocabulary). A brief summary of scales and descriptors of the three papers are presented in Table 11.1, with a detailed account of these scales and descriptors presented in Appendix A ‘The LPATE Writing Test—Assessment Scales Before 2007’. The scales and descriptors can be seen to relate to aspects particularly relevant to English language teachers’ language proficiency, rather than language proficiency in general.

Table 11.1 Overview of scales and descriptors in the LPATE

	Writing Test	Speaking Test	Classroom Language Assessment (CLA)
Scale 1	Grammatical accuracy	Pronunciation, intonation and stress	Grammatical accuracy
Scale 2	Organisation and coherence	Reading aloud with meaning	Pronunciation, intonation and stress
Scale 3	Task completion	Grammatical accuracy	The language of interaction
Scale 4	Ability to identify and correct errors	Organisation and cohesion	The language of instruction
Scale 5	Ability to explain errors	Interacting with peers	
Scale 6		Explaining language matters to peers	

There are similarities in the scales upon which performance in Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment was evaluated. All three papers pay attention to grammatical accuracy. Two papers relate to oral performance—Speaking and CLA include a *Pronunciation, Intonation and Stress* scale. The Speaking and Writing Tests include an *Organisation and Coherence* scale, as in both papers candidates are expected to organise their oral or written presentations logically and coherently.

On each assessment scale are there five levels (Level 1–Level 5). Level 5 is the highest level, which indicates that candidates have high language proficiency in the language assessed on a specific scale; Level 1 is the lowest level, indicating that candidates have little awareness of the respective language requirement, or demonstrate little capacity to meet the requirement. An example of the five levels for ‘*Grammatical Accuracy*’ in the Writing Test is presented in Appendix B ‘[The LPATE Speaking Test—Assessment Scales Before 2007](#)’.

The Writing Module

LPATE Writing Test and Assessment Scales

The Writing Test consists of two parts: Part I: *Expository Writing*; and Part II: *Error Correction and Explanation*. There were some modifications to the Writing Test when the LPATE paper was revisited and revised in 2007 (See Urmston, Chap. 14). Table 11.2 outlines the structures of the LPATE Writing Test before and after 2007.

As shown in Table 11.2, from 2007 onwards, three major changes were effected in the LPATE Writing Test:

Table 11.2 LPATE Writing Test before and after 2007

	The LPATE Writing Test before 2007	The LPATE Writing Test after 2007
Task types	<p>Part 1: Task 1 Expository writing Text: a text up to 200 words as a stimulus Task: Each candidate is given either a primary-focused task or secondary-focused tasks, depending on the teaching focus of the candidates at the time of application</p> <p>Part 2: Task 2A and 2B Correcting and explaining errors/problems Tasks: candidates are asked to correct 10–15 specified errors/problems in a student’s composition. They are then asked to explain a selection of these errors/problems</p>	<p>Part 1: Task 1 Composition Text: a text up to 200 words as a stimulus Task: Part 1 requires candidates to write one text of about 400 words (e.g. expository, narrative, descriptive, etc.) on a topic familiar to Hong Kong teachers (but not necessarily on education)</p> <p>Part 2: Task 2A and 2B Correcting and explaining errors/problems. Task 2A expects students to detect and correct errors in a student’s composition of appropriately 300 words Task 2B expects candidates to explain errors and problems in the format of gap-filling</p>

Table adapted from: Education Bureau of Hong Kong, 2007; Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2000

1. The topics for the writing task went beyond a purely teaching context.
2. Candidates were expected to have the capacity to write different text types apart from solely expository writing.
3. Instead of having to explain errors in a student text, candidates had to complete a separate task on error correction through gap filling.

The similarity lies in that both papers assess the candidates' capacity to produce a piece of writing and to identify and explain errors to students. The first aspect is closely related to candidates' own writing proficiency, whereas the second aspect relates to candidates' grammar-related pedagogical content knowledge. The structure of both LPATE papers echoes a recent study on teachers' perception of the LPATE—with the study indicating that qualified teachers need both language proficiency and pedagogical content knowledge to demonstrate that they are professional teachers (Coniam, Falvey, & Xiao, 2017).

As the LPATE training courses were provided between the years 2001 and 2005, the courses were designed to meet the LPATE requirement before 2007. As mentioned in the introduction, analytical marking was carried out for the new Task 2 from 2007. The scales and descriptors of the LPATE Writing Test before 2007 are summarised and presented in Appendix A 'The LPATE Writing Test—Assessment Scales Before 2007'. Scales 1–3 were used to assess the 'expository writing' task, by focusing on *Organisation and Coherence*, *Grammatical Accuracy*, and *Task Completion*. Scales 4 and 5 were used to evaluate tasks on *correcting and explaining errors/problems*, by focusing on whether candidates were able to identify the errors and their capacity to explain the errors.

Awareness-Raising: Understanding the Writing Criteria

The Writing Module started with an awareness-raising exercise on understanding the criteria used to assess writing in the LPATE Writing Test. An understanding of the criteria was therefore intended to provide a prospective perspective so that participants would be able use the expected criteria, therefore being able to better shape their work (Sadler, 2005).

Participants taking the course were asked to study five expository writing samples. Such an approach—using writing exemplars—has been reported as a successful strategy in teacher professional development in that it helps teachers develop insights into teaching and assessing writing (Limbrick, Buchanan, Goodwin, and Schwarcz, 2010). Studying exemplars also enables English teachers to understand what writing at different levels looks like, as well as how to decide levels of different writing. Participants were asked to match five sample essays with five sets of grades, drawing on the scales and descriptors in the LPATE. Such an exercise was likely to raise participants' awareness of criteria and standards of the LPATE writing, before they approached specific writing tasks.

Simulation Writing Tasks

Simulation writing tasks was another approach used in the Writing Module. Simulation tasks create settings and tasks in such a way that they represent what are thought to be pertinent aspects of the real-life context (Shohamy, 1995). In second language education, simulation tasks are considered to generate rich authentic language, thus leading to active student engagement, and enabling students to use second language in the target culture (Oxford, 1997). Simulation tasks are also used in second language teacher education, as such tasks can be considered as authentic samples of pedagogical practice (Andrews, 2002). In the training module, the simulation tasks allowed English teacher participants to practise coping with situations that were likely to take place in real school settings, such as writing minutes, developing a discussion paper and writing an article for a newspaper, as Table 11.3 elaborates.

The three simulation writing tasks in Table 11.3 provided participants with authentic settings to write about. More specifically, Task 1 was about taking the minutes of a meeting. The simulation was that participants held a panel meeting to discuss students' work, as they indeed do at school, and took minutes of the panel meeting. Task 2 required participants to write a discussion paper to be submitted to the principal, on the basis of letters of complaint written by parents on writing instruction. Task 3 expected participants to write an opinion piece to a newspaper, in response to a criticism of the school's marking policy. Pre-task activities, including both lectures and discussion on the writing topic, were provided to facilitate the writing process. Such processes simulate the experience of writing that participants were likely to experience in school, thus making these writing tasks more authentic.

Participants' writing products were assessed according to Scales 1, 2 and 3 of the LPATE Writing Test, namely *Organisation and Coherence*, *Grammatical Accuracy and Task Completion*. It was intended that participants would become more aware of how to develop their writing to meet the expected standards as stated in the scales.

Error Correction

In the LPATE assessment, candidates were asked to correct errors in students' writing and explain errors to students. As error correction emerged as one of the weakest elements in the LPATE Writing Test from the perspective of candidate performance, the training module was developed to help participants develop strategies for correcting errors and provide them with practice in error correction.

Table 11.3 Simulation writing tasks

Task 1 Writing minutes	
Background	The principal of St. Luke's secondary school was concerned about the English language standards in the school after the school recently changed to CMI (Chinese Medium of Instruction). The school board decided that priority must be given to promoting English. At the end of the year, the principal decided to publish a newsletter to show how successful this year's theme has been. The newsletter, which will be sent to parents, included examples of student work. As there will not be space for a lot of student work to be shown, you have to decide which texts will be included
Pre-task	A lecture on 'how to write minutes of a meeting' Gap filling exercises on writing a minute
Simulation	Participants were given a set of "student" work, poems and stories, and instructions to hold a panel meeting to discuss the production of a school newsletter. Participants were divided into groups of 8 and given role cards (teacher A to E, secretary 1–2, and a chairman). They held a discussion and notes were taken
Writing task	The writing task is to write up the minutes of the meeting
Task 2 Developing a discussion paper	
Background	Your school has received two letters from parents with conflicting views on how student writing should be marked (whether teachers should mark every mistake or not). The principal has instructed the members of the English panel to re-examine its policy on marking and to prepare for a meeting to discuss the issues involved, at which a whole-school policy on marking will be adopted
Pre-task	Letters and extracts to be read at home
Simulation	There have been letters from parents complaining about the English department's marking policy. These letters were handed out, plus some other short extracts about error correction from teaching methodology textbooks
Writing task	Participants were asked to write a discussion paper to prepare for a meeting with the principal where the department's marking policy will be decided. A discussion paper should present the various options for error correction and marking, and should consider the pros and cons of these options. This paper should not propose one solution, but put forward ideas for discussion and final agreement by the department together with the principal
Task 3 Writing an article for a newspaper	
Background	A letter has appeared in the newspaper, accusing the school of laxity in its marking. You have been asked to write a response for publication in the paper. You should bear in mind that this will be read by the general public as well as teachers. It will be of particular interest to parents. You should write in a way that is appropriate to this audience. You should also present your points in such a way that people will be attracted by the subject, and their interest maintained
Pre-task	A lecture on developing a newspaper article and using reporting verbs Studying the format and style of newspaper articles in local educational supplements
Simulation	A letter has appeared in the newspaper, complaining about the school's marking policy. Participants were asked to write a response for publication in the local English language paper
Writing task	In this task, you have to direct yourself at a different audience, including the general public, teachers and parents of school-aged children. Pay attention to the style of a newspaper article; look at the ways it attracts and maintains readers' attention. Look at the types of language used: is it jargon known only to professionals, or more common terms?

Reviewing Grammatical Items

The training course on grammar started with a review of useful grammatical terms, to help participants review English grammar they would have probably learned at school or university. The grammatical items reviewed included nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, verb tenses, prepositions, adverbs, determiners, sentence structures and clauses. The explicit revision on grammatical terms was intended to help participants to become familiarised with grammatical terms which could be used to explain grammar to students in the classroom. As English is not only the medium of instruction but also the objective of teaching, a good command of language knowledge is therefore necessary (Elder, 2001; Elder & Kim, 2014). Grammatical knowledge is a key aspect of teachers' content knowledge, as English teachers need to explain grammar to second language learners. In Section I of this volume (Coniam and Falvey, Chap. 1) concerning the initiatives for the introduction of the LPATE, it was noted how in Hong Kong in the 1990s a large proportion of English teachers were not subject-trained. In the context of the enhancement programme, it was therefore felt that an overview of grammatical items would provide all in-service English teacher participants with the chance to refine their grammatical knowledge.

Explaining Grammar to Students

The training module on grammar included a demonstration of how grammatical mistakes may be corrected, supported with exercises on error correction. Table 11.4 demonstrates language used to explain grammatical mistakes to students; four error correction and explanation tasks are presented in Table 11.5 as examples. Table 11.5 does not include all examples but rather serves as an example of how error explanation was practised in the training module.

Along with the explanations of grammatical items outlined above, there were grammatical exercises on correcting students' errors in writing and explain grammatical errors to students. Table 11.5 presents two such examples—on attributive clauses and on comparison, respectively. It was intended that these two examples would provide an insight into how error correction might be practised in the Writing Module.

The four example tasks on attributive clauses and on comparison give a flavour of the kinds of grammatical exercises participants conducted in the classroom. The tasks allowed participants to practise correcting errors, as well as to explain errors. To complete these tasks, participants needed to have relevant subject-matter knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge, so that they would be able to explain error correction to students in ways that were accessible and understandable. The exercises provide focused training on different aspects of English grammar, thus enhancing participants' capacity to identify and correct students' mistakes.

Table 11.4 Explaining grammatical mistakes to students

Grammatical items	Problem areas
Relative clauses	<i>Redundant relative pronoun</i> I agree that dating <i>which</i> is very time consuming <i>Missing relative pronouns leading to double sentences</i> Heroes and ordinary mortals are both human beings, they need to eat and sleep <i>That or which instead of who to refer to people</i> This is nothing for those students which are from a rich family, but what about the poor ones?
Pronouns	<i>Missing pronouns</i> I want to keep it as a pet, but I am afraid my mother won't allow ^ <i>Wrong case</i> Can you get he for me please?
Comparison	<i>Double comparison</i> I think a long and dull life is more preferable to a short exciting one <i>Missing comparison words</i> Today people in Hong Kong are ^ overweight and unfit than ever before
Negatives	<i>Correlative constructions (neither...nor.../not...either/none...neither)</i> She is not tall and not fat <i>Modals</i> Students are no need to bring mobile phones to school
Possessives	<i>Redundant possessive</i> Most school's don't hold dances because they do not want to encourage dating <i>Missing possessive</i> I am sure this will improve <i>Hong Kong</i> competitiveness <i>Time expressions</i> I have <i>seven days</i> holiday in December
Sentence structure	<i>Double sentences</i> The old woman did not say anything, she seemed every angry <i>Incomplete sentences</i> When a woman gets married. The woman must obey her husband <i>Faculty parallelism</i> I think a good teacher must have a good sense of humour, responsible and care
Word order	<i>Adjectives</i> She has <i>dark big</i> eyes <i>Compound subject</i> Last week I and my friends went camping on Cheung Chau

Summary

The Writing Module consisted of two parts—expository writing and error correction—broadly mirroring what was assessed in the LPATE Writing Test. The sessions on expository writing were intended to train participants to write in school settings through tasks simulating what would happen in schools. With regard to error correction, the training modules offered the chance to review grammatical items, as well as providing exercises for participants to correct and to practise explaining errors

Table 11.5 Sample error correction tasks

Task 4 Correcting the errors involving relative clauses	
Read the sentences from student compositions given below carefully. Some have errors involving <i>relative clauses</i> and some are correct. If the sentence is wrong, correct it. If it is correct, put a ✓ on the line	
In contrast, if someone who only stays at home, it is boring	(1) _____
She doesn't like girls they are more beautiful than she is	(2) _____
I saw a woman that was buying some fruit	(3) _____
Task 5 Explaining errors to students (attributive clause)	
Correct the errors in the following students' sentences, and discuss, in your own words, more fully the error problems 1. For some countries which too far from the equator, farming is not possible Analysis: _____ 2. But there are many parents that disapprove of their children dating Analysis: _____	
Task 6 Correcting errors involving comparison	
Read carefully the sentences from student compositions given below. Some have comparison errors and some are correct. If the sentence is wrong, correct it. If it is correct, put a ✓ on the line	
And I felt that beautiful morning like a wonderful dream	(1) _____
Singapore has a better infrastructure than Zhuhai	(2) _____
The creature looked liked very angry	(3) _____
The restaurant got so hot that some people became angrier	(4) _____
Task 7 Explaining errors to students. (comparison)	
Correct the errors in the following students' sentences, and discuss, in your own words, more fully the error problems 1. People in these poor countries don't have much money to spend as so Hong Kong people _____ 2. Students who get better grade in the examination should be allowed to go to university _____	

to their students. It will thus be appreciated that while the Writing Module targeted specifically the requirements as stated in the LPATE, it also attempted to impart and develop the knowledge needed by English language teachers.

The Speaking Module

LPATE Speaking Test and Assessment Scales

The Speaking Module was designed to fulfil the LPATE requirement before 2007 (a revision of the LPATE was conducted in 2007). A comparison of writing tasks in the LPATE Speaking Test before 2007 and after 2007 can be found in Table 11.6.

As shown in Table 11.6, from 2007, the reading of a poem was removed from the Speaking Test (see Urmston, Chap. 14 and Falvey & Coniam, Chap. 18, this volume). The CUHK Speaking Module, as provided in development courses between 2001 and 2005, still included a component on ‘reading aloud a poem’.

Three speaking topics were included in the training module ‘first day at school’, ‘pioneering journeys’ and ‘social and professional interaction’. Within each topic, a range of tasks targeted at enhancing participants’ speaking proficiency from different aspects was used. These tasks included reading a poem, reading a prose passage, phonology tasks, recounting a story, expressing view points, and speaking in groups. These tasks focused on speaking proficiency in line with the six scales specified in Table 11.1 and Appendix B ‘The LPATE Speaking Test—Assessment Scales Before 2007’).

Speaking Tasks in the Training Module

Altogether 36 speaking tasks were used in the training module. A summary of these 36 tasks on three topics are listed in Table 11.7 (first day at school), Table 11.8 (pioneering journeys) and Table 11.9 (social and professional interaction). In each table, the purposes of the tasks and scales upon which these tasks were evaluated are presented. The tables show that these tasks covered all six scales, namely *Pronunciation, Reading Aloud with Meaning, Grammatical Accuracy, Organisation and Coherence, Interacting with Peers, and Explaining Language Matters to Peers*, as stated in Table 11.1. These scales shared similarities with the three levels of oral proficiency identified by Iwashita, Brown, McNamara, and O’Hagan (2008) in assessing oral language proficiency in the pilot TOFLE iBT, namely linguistic

Table 11.6 The LPATE Speaking Test—before and after 2007

	The LPATE Speaking Test before 2007	The LPATE Speaking Test after 2007
Task types	Part 1: Task 1A Reading aloud a poem Task 1B Reading aloud a prose passage Task 1C Telling a story/recounting an experience/presenting arguments Part 2: Task 2 Group interaction	Part 1: Task 1A Reading aloud a prose passage Task 1B Recounting a personal experience or presenting arguments based on a stimulus Part 2: Task 2 Group discussion

resource (grammatical accuracy, grammatical complexity and vocabulary), phonology (pronunciation, intonation and rhythm), and fluency (pause, repair, speech rate and number of syllabus produced in the utterance). An additional aspect in the LPATE

Table 11.7 Speaking tasks and their aims—first day at school

Tasks	Purposes of tasks	Scales addressed
Poem: 'First day at school' by Roger McGough		
Task 1 Reading a children's poem to explore meanings, word-play and feelings	To help participants to read a poem with understanding and expression	Scale 2
Task 2 Practising elements of stress and intonation	To help participants to read the poem aloud so that it can be clearly understood	Scale 1
Task 3 Identifying short and long vowels	To raise awareness of the basic spelling rules	Scale 1
Task 4 Making a recording of a reading of 'First day at school' by Roger McGough	To allow participants to demonstrate that they can read aloud a selected text with meaning and in such a manner that it would arouse the interest of the listeners	Scale 2
Prose 'My first day of school' Ladies' home journal Sept. 1998		
Task 5 Talking about an episode in the past	To help participants develop oral fluency in recounting an experience	Scale 4
Task 6 Reading aloud examples of authentic spoken English in a group, focusing on attitudes and feelings expressed by the speaker	To help participants become familiar with the rhythms and idioms of spoken discourse, and give practice for scale 2—reading aloud with meaning	Scale 2
Task 7 Studying examples of authentic English and abstracting pattern of usage	To build language awareness, in particular related to tense used in talking about the past, the difference between spoken and written styles, and transitional words and phrases	Scale 3
Task 8 Transforming a text from present tense to past tense	To practise accurate grammatical use	Scale 3
Task 9 Recording a short informal speech remembering your first day as an English teacher	To demonstrate the ability to recount an episode from the teachers' own experience in a coherent manner, using appropriate tenses and transitions	Scale 4
Phonology IPA and phonetic transcription Voiced and voiceless consonants		
Task 10 Reading a phonetic transcription in IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)	To assess participants' knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet	Scale 1
Task 11 Matching spellings with articulation charts	To identify the phonemes of English from their conventional spelling	Scale 1
Task 12 Deriving a phonological rule for the information of words with -s and -ed endings	To show that phonological processes are regular and can often be captured by simple principles	Scale 1

Speaking Module focused on how participants communicate and interact with peers. This aspect was specifically relevant to the LPATE Speaking Test.

The first 12 tasks were intended to strengthen participants' oral competence, as assessed by Scales 1–4 in the LPATE. These tasks were built on school-related themes and drew attention to the following skills: reading aloud with understanding, reading with accurate pronunciation and grammatical use and recounting one's own experiences.

Tasks relating to 'social and professional interaction' are presented in Table 11.9. These tasks were more advanced in term of the complexity of the language required; they were also more closely related to participants' daily encounters in teaching.

It will be noted that Scales 5 and 6 were the two major scales that were practised in Unit 3, where participants had the opportunity to practise '*Interacting with Peers*' (Scale 5) and '*Explaining Language Matters to Peers*' (Scale 6). Similar to tasks used in the Writing Module, simulation tasks and role-plays were used so that participants could practise spoken English in real lifelike situations.

Six speaking tasks are presented in Table 11.10 as an illustration of how different speaking tasks were used to address each of the six assessment scales. Whereas the samples do not represent all the tasks that were used in the training modules, they give readers a flavour of how different scales were practised and addressed in the Speaking Module.

As Table 11.10 shows, Task 12 focused on *Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation*; the task expected participants to transcribe words into IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet) as their tutor read out different words. Thus, participants needed to have both a good knowledge of IPA as well as an understanding of how sounds are related to pronunciation.

Task 1 was a task on '*Reading Aloud with Meaning*'. After reading a poem, participants needed to answer a series of questions which would help them relate meaning to the way they read the poem. Participants were also asked to think about where to pause—in order to make the meaning clearer to the audience.

Task 8 expected participants to practise reading out a passage in a grammatically accurate way. Although the task only required participants to transform present tense into past tense, the task was intended to remind participants about the need to pay attention to tense while speaking.

Task 21 asked participants to plan a talk before making the talk, thus drawing attention to how a talk should be coherent and properly organised.

Task 27 drew out explicitly patterns of conversations in different school situations, as well as ways to tackle difficulties in conversation. This task provided a chance for participants to practise communicating with peers, as well as raising participants' awareness of potential obstacles in conversations and how they might be dealt with.

Task 32 was a group discussion task where participants were expected to explain their ideas to their peers.

The above six examples illustrate how tasks with different focuses were used in the LPATE training module to enhance participants' competence in speaking. More importantly, these tasks drew explicit attention to the key issues in effective speaking—thus raising participants' awareness about ways to improve their oral English.

Table 11.8 Speaking tasks and their aims—pioneering journal

Tasks	Purposes of tasks	Scales addressed
Talk: Reminiscences of migrating to Australia		
Task 13 Listening to the reminiscences of a migrant to Australia in the 1950s and take notes	To identify the stage of talk	Scale 4
Task 14 Analysing the transition in the text	To identify cohesive devices	Scale 4
Poem: In the desert Prose: Overseas Chinese		
Task 15 Analysing a poem's syntactic structure in groups	To observe the different relationship between parts of complex and compound sentences	Scale 3, 5, 6
Task 16 Marking the pauses and run-on in a poem and suggesting ways to read it aloud	To read aloud with meaning	Scale 1, 2
Task 17 Reading aloud "where did the overseas Chinese come from"	To demonstrate ability to read aloud with meaning, with clear pronunciation. To apply what has been learnt about sentence structure to use correct phrasing in reading aloud	Scale 1, 2
Using meta-language		
Task 18 Constructing a parallel text in the group	To reinforce grammar and meta-language, and practise discussing language matters with peers	Scale 3, 6
Task 19 Completing a blank cloze in groups	To demonstrate understanding of English syntax by reconstructing a text	Scale 3, 6
Constructing narrative		
Task 20 Constructing a simple narrative based on a sentence	To use relative clauses and embedded structures to embellish a story	Scale 3
Task 21 Giving a short talk about a migrant journey	To practise a talk from notes structuring the narrative round stages and key words	Scale 3, 4
Phonology The vowels of English: Pure vowels and diphthongs		
Task 22 Distinguishing and producing 3 vowel phonemes in English	To learn to distinguish three similar phonemes in English (/e/, /ei/ and /æ/). These three phonemes create considerable difficulties for Cantonese speakers	Scale 1
Task 23 Practising vowel production	To make a clear distinction between words with similar vowel sounds	Scale 1
Task 24 Transcribing into IPA one verse of the poem "in the desert"	To recapitulate and consolidate what has already been learned about English vowels. Provide a starting point for new material on vowel length in English	Scale 1

Table 11.9 Speaking tasks and their aims—social and professional interaction

Tasks	Purposes of tasks	Scales addressed
<i>Group dynamics</i>		
Task 25 Warming up. Free form discussion, asking for advice	To focus attention on some of the features of natural conversation and discussion	Scale 5
Task 26 Conventions of conversation	To understand the different rules of conversation in Cantonese and in English	Scale 5
Task 27 Social behaviour in conversations	To understand the social and interpersonal factors affecting communication in conversations	Scale 5
Task 28 Roles in discussions	To understand the roles people should play in discussion	Scale 5
Task 29 Role-play card game	To practise performing certain essential functions in discussion To identify language used to perform these functions	Scale 5
Task 30 Observing turn-taking in authentic speech	To understand how native speakers take turns to talk, and compare it with the average dialogue in a text book	Scale 5
<i>Simulation</i>		
<i>Choosing books as class readers</i>		
Task 31 Reading aloud from selected texts	To practise reading aloud with meaning.	Scale 1, 2
Task 32 Justifying your choice of texts used as textbooks for primary and secondary school students	To practise expressing one's views and justifying the explanation	Scale 5, 6
Task 33 Reaching an agreement in the group	To practise negotiation and reaching an agreement	Scale 5, 6
<i>Phonology</i>		
<i>Difficulties for Cantonese speakers</i>		
Task 34 Pronouncing initial single consonants	To practise consonants difficult for Cantonese speakers	Scale 1
Task 35 Practising the/s/ and /esh/sounds in a variety of phonological environments	To distinguish the two similar sounds	Scale 1
Task 36 Voiced and voiceless final stop	To understand and distinguish the voiced and voiceless final stop	Scale 1
Task 37 Distinguishing l and r	To increase participants' awareness of the articulation of these two sounds	
Task 38 Reciting a short poem	To practise reading aloud with meaning	Scale 1

Table 11.10 Sample speaking tasks

<i>Scale 1: Pronunciation, stress and intonation</i>	
Task 12	Deriving a phonological rule for the formation of words with –s and –ed endings
	Listen to your teacher’s pronunciation of the following words. Transcribe them into IPA, paying careful attention to the sounds used in the added inflections Hops, rises, bathed, pages, called, cats, carted, laughs, roamed, waifs, waves, helped, watches, balls, poked, sings, laughed, loves, faced, kisses, wished, paths, watched, hobs, loved, cads, homes, praised, needs, paged, pays, rained, seeks, tags, banged, hears, fines, cared, wishes, paid, raided, keeps, catches, docks, begged, dogs, stabbed, bathes, hates, robs, beiges
<i>Scale 2: Reading aloud with meaning</i>	
Task 1	Reading a children’s poem to explore meanings, word-play and feelings
	Poem: First day at school (by Roger McGough) A millionbillionmillion miles from home Waiting for the bell to go (To go where?) Why are they so big, other children? So noisy? So much at home they Must have been born in uniform Lived all their lives in playgrounds Spent the year inventing games They don’t let me in. Games. They are rough, that swallow you up
	Answer the following questions: 1. Who is the speaker in this poem? What things tell us that this is a child speaking? What experience is he/she describing? 2. Listen to the tutor reads the poem aloud and mark where there are pauses and where lines run on. How helpful is the punctuation? 3. Explain the relationship between lines 5, 6 and 7. 4. Which things do you think give the child a feeling of comfort? 5. Try reading the poem aloud in your group, thinking about how you want it to sound
<i>Scale 3: Grammatical accuracy</i>	
Task 8	Transforming a text from present tense to past tense
	Read the following passage and transform it into past tense I live in a small village which has only one school—it’s more than a mile outside the village, in the country side. My friends and I usually walk to school—it can be very wet and cold in winter, but there’s no other way to get there. We love it when it snows a lot and school’s closed. There is one bus but it doesn’t leave the village until 9 a.m., which is when school starts, so if we took that we’d be late. The walk to school is uphill all the way. It’s hard work when the wind is in your face
<i>Scale 4: Organisation and cohesion</i>	
Task 21	Give a short talk about a migrant journey
	Think up the basic outline of a story you want to tell about a journey. It may be a story of a family member or someone you have heard of, or your own story if you have had such an experience. Write the outline down the page the same way as you wrote your sentence. Add in some other parts you want to tell as notes and asides (This task is assessed according to Scales 3 and 4.)
<i>Scale 5: Interacting with peers</i>	
Task 27	Social behaviour in conversations
	Free discussion: How is it decided who will speak in these different types of verbal interaction? e.g., staff meetings; department meetings; committee meetings; groups of colleagues having lunch together What social and interpersonal factors lie behind any differences? Suggest ways of dealing with the following conversational difficulties Someone who always dominates the conversation A situation where you find yourself the only person talking A situation where you have an idea but everyone else is talking so much that you can’t get a word in
<i>Scale 6: Explaining language matters to peers</i>	
Task 32	Justify your choice of texts used as textbooks for primary and secondary school students
	Group discussion Decide as a group which text you will choose to be the class reader. You should consider all the extracts, and be prepared to present your decision to the other groups, explaining why you have chosen this particular text and saying why you would not use the others. Quote from the texts to back up your own view. (This task is assessed according to scales 5 and 6.)

Summary

The Speaking Module in the LPATE training courses provided a series of tasks to address the six scales assessed in the LPATE Speaking Test. These tasks were intended to support participants in improving their language proficiency through providing the opportunity for practice and through raising their awareness of the diverse set of elements associated with what can be broadly termed ‘effective speaking’.

The Classroom Language Module

LPATE CLA Paper and Assessment Scales

The Classroom Language Assessment (CLA) paper expects teachers to demonstrate their ability to communicate to students with appropriate grammar and with appropriate pronunciation, stress and intonation. The CLA paper consists of the assessment of two live lessons on two separate school days. The assessment is conducted by two assessors, with each assessor observing a single class teaching period. The CLA intends to assess language ability rather than teaching methodology. It should be noted that after the 2007 revision of the LPATE, the compulsory assessment of two lessons ceased, and was replaced by one assessment plus a number of randomly selected assessments (see Drave, Chap. 14; Falvey & Coniam, Chap. 18).

Language ability in the CLA is assessed on four scales, namely (1) grammatical accuracy, (2) pronunciation, stress and intonation, (3) the language of interaction, (4) the language of instruction. A description of these scales and descriptors can be found in Appendix C ‘[The LPATE CLA Paper—Assessment Scales Before 2007](#)’. *The Language of Interaction* and *The Language of Instruction* are the two main aspects of language ability specifically related to language teaching. Grammatical accuracy and pronunciation are embedded in the assessment of both *The Language of Instruction* and *The Language of Interaction*.

An Overview of Classroom Language Tasks

Table 11.11 outlines CLA tasks and on which scales these tasks were assessed. These tasks offered participants the opportunity to practise their classroom language: the purpose of each task is outlined in Table 11.11 alongside the nature of different tasks. Participants worked in small groups on each task, with group work rather than micro-teaching being used in the classroom language module, as it was felt that regular group work was more likely to offer participants a greater opportunity to practise different aspects of classroom language. As the course participants were all

Table 11.11 Classroom language tasks and their purposes

Tasks	Purposes of tasks	Scales addressed
Task 1 Understanding the scales and descriptors for CLA	To raise awareness of the different purposes of the language we use in the classroom	Scale 3 and 4
Task 2 Understanding the scales and descriptor for CLA	To appreciate the differences between Form and Function in the CLA scales	Scale 1 and 2
Task 3 Analysing the stages in a lesson	To identify the language signalling different stages of lessons	Scale 4
Task 4 Practising introducing stages of the lesson	To practise the language of introducing different stages of lessons	Scale 3 and 4
Task 5 How we communicate with our students (pause, stress and intonation)	To understand the effects of pause, stress and intonation on the language teachers use to give instruction to students	Scale 2 and 4
Task 6 How we communicate with our students (hand gestures)	To understand the gestures teachers use to communicate with students	Scale 4
Task 7 How we communicate with our students (stress, rhythm and gestures)	To understand how language and gestures can be used together to communicate with students	Scale 2 and 4
Task 8 How we communicate with our students (positive and negative language)	To practise ways of using positive and negative language to discipline students	Scale 4
Task 9 Using various language to manage and discipline class	To practise ways of using different language to manage and discipline students	Scale 4
Task 10 Discussion about the teaching of grammar	This task will lead participants to think about their own attitude towards the teaching and presentation of grammar	Scale 1 and 4
Task 11 Analysing a segment of a video recording of a pre-service teachers	This task will help participants think about different approaches to the presentation of teaching points	Scale 4
Task 12 Commenting on the different types of presentations	To understand the effects of different ways of presenting	Scale 4
Task 13 Observation of recorded elicitation techniques	This task will lead participants English teachers to think about what they are doing when they elicit language	Scale 3
Task 14 Assessing various method of elicitation	To identify and evaluate elicitation techniques	Scale 3
Task 15 Promoting oral interaction with and among students	To help participants English teachers think about activities that can promote oral interaction with students	Scale 3
Task 16 Question types	To practise different question types and think about the different responses that might be elicited by different question types	Scale 3

(continued)

Table 11.11 (continued)

Tasks	Purposes of tasks	Scales addressed
Task 17 Responding to students' answers	To identify the responding strategy that can elicit correct answers	Scale 3
Task 18 Jigsaw reading session: sharing opinions on error-correction	To encourage reflection on the decision-making processes involved in correcting errors	Scale 3
Task 19 Planning patterns of interaction in the classroom	To help participants English teachers think about the language needed for different patterns of interaction	Scale 3

in-service teachers, they were also asked to reflect on their classroom language when they taught in their own classes.

The different purposes of the tasks above demonstrate that The Language of Interaction (Scale 3) and The Language of Instruction (Scale 4) were two major areas of focus in the CLA module. The practice of the first two scales, namely Grammatical Accuracy (Scale 1) and Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation (Scale 2) were embedded in tasks on the language of interaction and the language of instruction. The following parts illustrate the tasks which were used to develop the above four scales, using selected classroom language tasks.

Understanding the Classroom Language Assessment Criteria

Similar to the Writing Module, the CLA module started with a session which aimed at enhancing participants' understanding of the scales and descriptors of the CLA paper. Participants had the chance to study classroom samples, which they could relate to the scales and descriptors developed for the LPATE; they also reflected on their own understanding of the role of classroom language in English language teaching, as shown in Table 11.12.

In Task 1, participants were given a range of classroom activities and asked to categorise them either as *'The Language of Interaction'* or as *'The Language of Instruction'*. Task 1 was intended to enable participants to reflect on their own classroom experience and thus become more aware of the two functions (i.e., the language of interaction and the language of instruction) of their classroom language. In Task 2, participants worked on a series of classroom situations and evaluated them in terms of on which scales the responses from teachers might be problematic. With the assistance of specific examples, Task 2 could therefore be seen to help with understanding of which scale a teacher's classroom language might be evaluated on.

Table 11.12 Sample task on understanding the CLA scales and descriptors

Task 1	Distinguishing between ‘The Language of Interaction’ and ‘The Language of Instruction’
	<p>Look at the extract from Syllabus Specifications for the Language Proficiency Assessment. Categorise these following activities as either ‘the language of interaction’ or ‘the language of instruction’, according to your understanding of the CLA</p> <p><i>Asking the students to be quiet</i> <i>Announcing the purpose of today’s lesson</i> <i>Telling the students to take out a different book</i> <i>Introducing a new grammar structure</i> <i>Giving the answers to an exercise completed earlier</i> <i>Answering a student’s question about what you taught yesterday</i> <i>Correcting a student when s/he gives a wrong answer</i> <i>Asking questions to find out if students have understood the lesson</i> <i>Commenting on a student presentation</i> <i>Encouraging a student to try to answer</i></p>
Task 2	Distinguishing Form and Function in the CLA scales
	<p>Scale 1 (Grammatical accuracy) and Scale 2 (Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation) are designed to assess the FORM of what the teacher says, whereas Scale 3 and 4 are designed to assess how well and appropriately the teacher’s language fulfils its FUNCTION. Read the scales and discuss the following examples of teacher utterances. Are these good examples? Identify the utterances that have problems, and say which scales would be referred to in each case</p> <p>The teacher asks, “who has bring the story book today?” The students all put up their hands to show they have</p> <p>The teacher repeated says the word “children” as [tʃɪdɪn]</p> <p>The teacher says, “If I added the past participle to this phrase, what difference would it make to its meaning?” to a low level F2 class</p> <p>A shy student has given an answer. It is slightly wrong. The teacher wants her to try again and get the right answer. S/he says, “No. Wrong. Do it again, now”</p> <p>A student says, “I forget bring my book.” The teacher says, “You forgot to bring your book? Well, can you share with your partner?”</p>

The Language of Instruction

Three key aspects assessed in the Language of Instruction include: *signalling*, *giving instructions* and *presenting*. The material used to develop and build on these elements of language will now be briefly outlined.

Signalling

Signalling is a classroom strategy which involves indicating the stage of a lesson by using appropriate language signals. Before completing Task 3—analysing the stages in a lesson—a range of techniques on signalling the different stages of class

Table 11.13 Tasks on signalling the stages in a classroom

Task 3	Analysing the stages in a lesson
	Watch the highlights of an English class and identify the stages in the lesson. Make a brief note to describe each stage
Task 4	Practising introducing stages of a lesson
	In groups of 4 or 5, get one copy of the jumbled lesson plan. You need to: Step 1: Re-order the jumbled lesson plan and Step 2: Compare your lesson with another group (member), then think of the next step in the lesson When you have completed this, appoint one person in the group as the “teacher”, and practise how you would lead your students from one stage of the lesson to the next. You should try to ensure they understand your instructions, and, if you think it is necessary, that they can see the relationship between parts

from Willis’ (1981) *Teaching English through English* were introduced to the participating English teachers. These included a wide set of language examples related to classroom organisation (such as greeting, starting or ending a lesson, checking attendance, instructions on using equipment). These examples provided participants with resources that they would consider using in their own classrooms as ways of signalling the changes in the stages of a lesson.

Participants worked on two tasks related to signalling: Task 3—analysing the stages in a lesson and Task 4—practising introducing stages of a lesson, as shown in Table 11.13.

Task 3 aimed at raising participants’ awareness of how teachers might use different language signals at different stages of lessons. Task 4 offered the authentic experience of practising introducing a lesson.

Giving Instructions

English teachers need to give instructions when conducting activities, giving homework, and managing classrooms. Effective instruction communicates meaning and also creates impact; the language of instruction also needs to be modified so that it suits the ability level of students. Tasks 5–9 demonstrate how different aspects of language support giving instruction in the classroom (see Table 11.14).

Task 5 focused on intonation, stress and pause. Intonation, stress and pause can impact on communication as they bear a communicative load, act as grammatical cohesion, as well as having a pragmatic function (Pickering, 2001). A study comparing the native-speaking teaching assistant and ITAs’ (International Teaching Assistants) intonation in class settings show that ITAs’ presentations and the ways they talk to students indicated a limited number of negotiations with students (Pickering, 2001). Task 5 aimed at helping teachers become aware how pauses, stress and intonation may help with communicating meaning to students.

Table 11.14 Instruction giving tasks

Task 5	Intonation, stress and pausing
	English teachers first complete a pre-task by listening to three classroom extracts and marking down: (1) where the teacher pauses; (2) stressed words; and (3) intonation patterns
Task 6	Hand gesture: Match the following gestures with their meanings
	Sit down, please; Stand up, please; Listen; Quite, please; Watch and listen; Watch; Everyone; Say it quietly, please; Say it louder, please; Say the whole sentence, please
	Adapted from: Garden, B and Gardner, F. (2000) Oxford Basic Classroom English, Oxford: Oxford

Task 6 focused on hand gestures. In classrooms, learners interpret teachers’ gestures in conjunction with verbal language input in order to learn successfully (Sime, 2006). In the training module, participants were given a series of pictures and potential meanings of gestures and were asked to match the pictures with the accompanying meanings. Task 6 thus drew explicit attention to how hand gestures may be used to express meanings.

After developing an understanding of how classroom language may be used in different ways to produce different impacts, participants were also asked to work on a series of commands in the classroom, and to express similar meanings in a different way. Participants listened to a recording of a series of commands and commented on whether the words indicated a mild or a strong command. Such a practice enabled teachers to extend their classroom language and think of different ways of talking to students.

For primary and junior secondary students, it was suggested that simple phrases and expressions might be more appropriate—so that students might understand them more easily. As for advanced students, simple commands can be built upon with a view to providing more variety and to familiarise students with different types of language. Hence, one focus of the CLA course was centred on helping teachers to practise extending simple language so that it would cater to the needs of students of different levels.

Table 11.15 Presenting tasks

Task 11	Analysing a segment of a video recording of a pre-service teacher
	<p>1. Read the benchmarking criteria for Scale 4 of the CLA component (language of instruction)</p> <p>2. Watch the segments of language presentation conducted by pre-service teachers in their teaching practice. Make notes on the content of the lesson: what is happening in each stage? Describe the approach to presenting teaching points</p> <p>As you watch the teachers presenting a new language point in their classrooms, note down the stages they go through. The following notes will help you</p>
Task 12	Commenting on different types of instructions
	<p>Comment on the different types of presentations used by the teachers. Consider the clarity of the explanations, the coherence of the presentation, the level of understanding required by the students, the degree of involvement of the students, and the meaningfulness of the explanations. Also consider the planning required by the teacher, and the unknown factors involved when presenting new materials</p>

Presenting

Presenting involves organising spoken language so that information is presented to learners in a coherent and accessible way, e.g. explaining a grammar point, a vocabulary point or a concept. Two sample tasks are provided in Table 11.15.

The Language of Interaction

Effective interaction in the second language classroom is likely to facilitate student learning, thus contributing to learning from two possible angles: first, students complete the tasks successfully, with the assistance of teachers; and second, students achieve a level of independence, due to the learning experience received in the first aspect (Gibbons, 2003).

There is a wide variety of studies on the language of interaction—for example, on the language of teachers, teacher and learner beliefs, factors which shape the interaction, social and cultural background, and psychological aspects (Tsui, 2001). With regards to the language used by teachers, issues needing to be considered include teacher questions, learner responses, teacher feedback, and turn-taking behaviour (Tsui, 2001). In the LPATE courses, the language of interaction was assessed from three aspects: *eliciting*, *responding* and *giving feedback*.

Table 11.16 Sample eliciting task

Task 14	Assessing various methods of elicitation
	<p>Watch the video and evaluate each elicitation technique:</p> <p>(a) What is the teacher trying to elicit from the students in each extract</p> <p>(b) How successful is the teacher on each occasion</p> <p>(c) Which technique works best and why?</p> <p>(d) Which lessons require the students to give the most complex responses? Which the least complex?</p> <p>(e) Which eliciting techniques brought out the most meaningful responses? Which the least?</p> <p>(f) Which brought out the most structured responses?</p>

Eliciting

Eliciting strategies include asking questions, modifying or reformulating a question, providing clues and hints in order to help students provide an appropriate response, as well as encouraging students to ask questions and respond to each other. Table 11.16 demonstrates an *eliciting* task.

The above task was intended to raise teachers’ awareness of the effects of eliciting techniques and to what extent these techniques were helpful, so that English teachers might consider how these techniques might be used in the classroom.

Table 11.17 Sample tasks on promoting interaction among students

Task 15	Promoting oral interaction with and among students
Task description	<p>1. Consider the following questions:</p> <p>(a) How much do your students speak in class?</p> <p>(b) How do you prepare speaking activities in class?</p> <p>(c) What particular problems do your students have with speaking in class?</p> <p>In what ways do you encourage real communication to take place in your lessons?</p> <p>2. Below is a list of activity types designed to help learners develop oral fluency. Think of an example of each type from your own experience</p> <p>(1) Information gap; (2) ranking; (3) jigsaw; (4) guessing; (5) problem-solving; (6) role-play; (7) group discussion; (8) task-based activity; and (9) prepared speech</p>
Task 16	Question types
Task description	<p>1. Display and reference questions</p> <p>Participants read two sets of questions-display and reference questions along with the responses they elicit. Then they are asked to think about the following questions:</p> <p>What are the advantages and disadvantages of using “display” and “reference” questions?</p> <p>What kinds of questions do you use in classroom?</p> <p>2. Participants studied different types of questions and the answers that the questions elicited</p> <p>3. Participants were given a set of answers and were asked to write questions to elicit these answers</p>

In addition to eliciting a response from an individual student, English teachers also need to promote interaction among students. Task 15 is a general task on promoting responses among students whereas Task 16 focuses specifically on questioning, as Table 11.17 illustrates.

Questioning is an important strategy in the classroom that elicits responses from students. Tsui (2001) suggests that teachers should modify their questions if they fail at first to elicit responses, paraphrase difficult words and simplify the syntax if the questions are too complex. Tsui (*ibid*) believes that teachers should study samples of effective and ineffective questions by watching videos of their own lessons. In this vein, Task 16 illustrates a task on using questioning as an eliciting strategy.

Responding and Giving Feedback

In the classroom, teachers need to respond to students in various ways: seeking clarification, giving confirmation, and asking for repetition. They are also expected to provide feedback and comment on students' responses. Table 11.18 demonstrates two tasks outlining responding to students and giving feedback.

Table 11.18 Responding and giving feedback tasks

Task 17	Responding to students' answers
	<p>Read the following samples of student-teacher interaction. Identify teachers' aims in each segment:</p> <p>1. T: Have you got any ambitions? What is your ambition? S: Nurse T: You want to be a nurse. (to another student) Yours? Yes, you. Yes, have you got any ambitions? (students laugh) Nothing? (to another student) You S: A teacher T: To be a teacher. O.K</p> <p>2. T: What is the reason? S: Because he can play tennis and also ping-pong, also drive the sports and mm he can speak German T: She can speak</p>
Task 18	Jigsaw reading session: sharing opinion on error correction
	<p>1. Participants read three texts on three ways of correcting students' errors in spoken language. Then they discuss how students' errors in spoken English should be corrected</p> <p>2. After your reading, reflect different ways of correcting errors. Work in groups and complete the sentences below:</p> <p>(a) Teachers should interrupt learners who have made a mistake or error when...</p> <p>(b) Teachers might wait until later to give feedback when...</p> <p>(c) Some errors should be left uncorrected by the teacher, for example, ...</p> <p>(d) Teachers can help learners to self-correct by...</p>

Task 17 was an awareness-raising exercise. Task 17 allowed participants to read examples of teachers eliciting language from students with the objective of becoming aware of how different classroom language elicits different responses from students.

Task 18 provided the opportunity for participants to discuss ways of providing feedback on students' errors and for them to reflect on strategies concerning correcting students' errors in different situations.

To sum up, the tasks in the CLA module focused mainly on Scale 3 (*The Language of Interaction*) and Scale 4 (*The Language of Instruction*). These tasks had the potential to raise participants' awareness about using their own language for different purposes in the classroom through exposing them to different examples and chances for practice.

Summary and Conclusion

The Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment modules were designed to help participants fulfil the LPR of the LPATE by focusing on the respective assessment scales laid out in the LPATE handbook (Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration, 2000). The tasks provided in the three modules were closely associated with using language in classrooms and provided participants with various opportunities to practise the language used in the school and classroom contexts. These tasks also raised participants' awareness of their written and spoken language in the context of teaching, thus contributing to the development of their language proficiency in the school context.

We now move on to Section III.

Appendix A: The LPATE Writing Test—Assessment Scales Before 2007

Scales	Descriptions
Scale 1 for Task 1	Organisation and coherence (Aspects assessed in this scale include: the development of ideas; the extent to which propositions are justified and elaborated or illustrated with examples to enhance meaning; the extent to which the text is coherent; the extent to which the text displays full audience awareness and appropriate register)
Scale 2 for Task 1	Grammatical accuracy (Aspects assessed in this scale include: the extent to which grammatical structures are accurate; the extent to which a wide range of structures are used)

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Scales	Descriptions
Scale 3 for Task 1	Task completion (Aspects assessed in this scale include: the extent to which the content demanded of the writer by the task is presented; the extent to which the task is fulfilled; the extent to which the writers display sensitivity to the audience)
Scale 4 for Task 2A	Correcting errors/problems in a student's composition (Aspects assessed in this scale include: the language ability to identify and correct errors; the ability to deal with complex discourse-level errors; the percentage of errors that have been corrected)
Scale 5 for Task 2B	Explaining errors/problems to students (Aspects assessed in this scale include: the language ability to explain errors; the ability to explain complex discourse-level errors; the percentage of errors that have been fully and appropriately explained)

Table adapted from *Syllabus specifications for the language proficiency assessment for teachers—English language*, 2000

Appendix B: The LPATE Speaking Test—Assessment Scales Before 2007

Scales	Descriptions
Scale 1 for Task 1A and 1B	Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation
Scale 2 for Task 1A and 1B	Reading aloud with meaning (which includes: speed of delivery and pausing; sensitivity to the text and to the audience; and the use of paralinguistic features to communicate the text)
Scale 3 for Task 1C	Grammatical accuracy (which includes: accuracy in grammatical structures and the range of structures)
Scale 4 for Task 1C	Organisation and cohesion (which includes: the use of means for connecting utterances; how relationship among concepts and ideas are expressed, signalled, and whether there is confusion; flow of ideas in discourse; the range of vocabulary used)
Scale 5 for Task 2	Interacting with peers (which includes: the ability to talk easily, confidently and knowledgeably with peers in a professional manner; control over the conversational strategies of initiation, turn-taking, responding and disagreeing; ability to keep discussion focused)

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Scales	Descriptions
Scale 6 for Task 2	Explaining language matters to peers (which includes: the ability to organise discourse or explain a students' language problems to peers; control over and familiarity with a wide range of appropriate meta-language without confusing peers; ability in producing appropriate examples to illustrate explanations; whether explanations are coherent and easy to follow)

Table adapted from *Syllabus specifications for the language proficiency assessment for teachers—English language, 2000*

Appendix C: The LPATE CLA Paper—Assessment Scales Before 2007

Scales	Descriptions
Scale 1	Grammatical accuracy (which includes: the accuracy of grammatical structure; the occurrence of inaccurate expressions)
Scale 2	Pronunciation, stress and intonation (which includes: the accuracy of pronunciation; whether and to what extent there are first language characteristics; sentence stress and intonation patterns; and the effectiveness of communication)
Scale 3	The language of interaction (which includes: the level of linguistic awareness and sensitivity to student responses; the ability to react in an appropriate linguistic manner to students' initiation; the language ability to be aware of and to react to students' responses even if these are incomplete or lacking in coherence; and whether and to extent teachers have language problems that impede communication)
Scale 4	The language of instruction (which includes: the ability of using English as the language of presentation; the ability to organise discourse and use appropriate signalling devices in order to alert students to the various stages of a presentation; and whether and to what extent classroom instructions are clear, comprehensible, and appropriate for the level of the class)

Table adapted from *Syllabus specifications for the language proficiency assessment for teachers—English language, 2000*

Appendix D: Levels and Descriptors for Scale 2—Grammatical Accuracy in Writing

5	Grammatical structures are always accurate, with no occurrence whatsoever of non-idiomatic or other inappropriate expressions. There is access to a wide range of structures, which can be invoked at any time. Any ‘mistakes’ that occur can be categorised as lapses rather than systematic errors
4	Grammatical structures are mostly or always accurate. In isolated instances, non-idiomatic or otherwise inappropriate expression may occur but communication is never impeded
3	Grammatical structures are greatly accurate but errors may occasionally occur when more complex structures are attempted. Comprehension is seldom impeded. Some complex structures are attempted
2	Grammatical errors occur regularly and may sometimes impede the readers’ understanding. Few complex structures are attempted
1	Most of the texts contain grammatical errors, causing comprehension to break down completely at times. Access to basic structures is clearly adequate and communication with reader is often impeded

Table adapted from *Syllabus specifications for the language proficiency assessment for teachers—English language*, 2000, p. 53

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