Pathways to Teach Canada

Parcours vers l'enseignement Canada

LANGUAGE COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION (LCATP)

TEST-TAKERS' GUIDE

cmec

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation (Canada)

CONTENTS

Welcome to the Language Competency Assessment for the Teaching Profession (LCATP) guide for test-takers. This guide gives important information about the LCATP, including how to register, how to prepare, and how scoring works. The guide is divided into three main sections:

1. Before taking the LCATP
2. Preparing for the LCATP
3. After completing the LCATP

It is recommended that potential test-takers read the entire guide before registering for the LCATP. This will ensure that they are familiar with the LCATP registration process and will enhance their ability to prepare for the test.

BEFORE TAKING THE LCATP

What is the LCATP?

The LCATP is a test designed to measure the English language proficiency of internationally educated teachers (IETs) wishing to become certified teachers in Canada. The LCATP comprises four one-hour-long online modules, which assess writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Like other language tests, the LCATP assesses test-takers' knowledge of language, vocabulary, and grammar. However, the LCATP also measures specific language competencies that are essential to teach effectively in English-first-language Canadian schools.

Test-takers writing the LCATP will notice that the test items relate to common tasks that Canadian teachers must perform as part of their duties. These tasks include sending emails to parents, reading curriculum documents, listening to student responses, and informing students about a topic. All language use is context dependent, and so LCATP items test an IET's ability to use English in the context of teaching in Canadian classrooms.

The test does not assess a test-taker's knowledge of any specific teaching subject: it is a language test, not a test of subject-area knowledge.

Who is the intended audience for the LCATP?

The LCATP is designed to be written by IETs who have completed a teacher education program outside of Canada in a language other than English or French. If you are unsure whether you need to complete the LCATP for certification in Canada, please visit the Pathways to Teach Canada website.

The LCATP is the only language-competency assessment accepted by the majority of participating provincial and territorial regulatory bodies for the teaching profession. However, in Ontario and in British Columbia, other language assessments are accepted as well.

IETs wishing to become certified teachers in Canada should be familiar with Pathways to Teach Canada (Pathways). The Pathways to Teach Canada website has much useful information for helping IETs become certified to teach in Canada.

As part of the process of becoming certified to teach in Canada, IETs will be asked to demonstrate their language competency when applying for certification in most provinces and territories. Candidates may need to provide:

- acceptable LCATP results in French or English; or

- evidence of completion of a teacher education program entirely in French or English.

What language skills does the LCATP assess?

The LCATP tests four different language modalities: writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Within each modality, a range of specific language skills are assessed. **Table 1** presents a summary of language skills assessed within each modality.

Table 1. Language skills assessed by the LCATP

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening
• Content and ideas • Vocabulary • Grammar/conventions • Coherence and organization	• Pronunciation • Speech fluency and diction • Read-aloud fluency • Vocabulary • Grammar • Appropriate tone • Coherence and organization	• Comprehension • Fluency • Grammar • Vocabulary	• Comprehension • Grammar • Vocabulary

Each of these skills is assessed in situations that are relevant to teaching. Test items are situated in three broad teaching-specific contexts: managing the classroom and student behaviour, instructing and assessing, and communicating with parents and professionals (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Teaching-specific contexts for LCATP items

Managing the classroom and student behaviour	Instructing and assessing	Communicating with parents and professionals
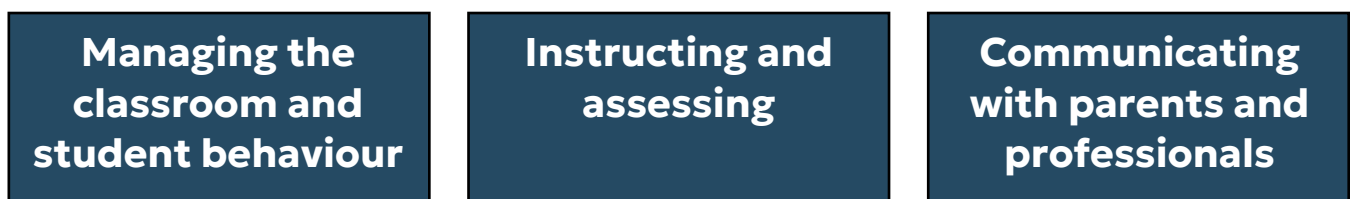
Test-takers attempting the LCATP should be prepared to perform language tasks that Canadian teachers do every day. These include the following:

- writing tasks, such as composing emails to colleagues, letters to parents, or written instructions to students;

- speaking tasks, such as giving clear oral instructions or feedback to students;

- reading tasks, such as reading and understanding policy documents or educational research; and

- listening tasks, such as understanding audio resources or students' oral responses.

A full description of the language framework used to develop the LCATP can be found at https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/320/Speaking_for_Excellence.pdf.

How do I register for the LCATP?

For information about how to register for the LCATP, including information about fees, consult Pathways' Terms of Use.

You can also review the video guides explaining the LCATP registration process through your Pathways to Teach Canada account, on the Pathways' portal.

You do not need to be in Canada to register for, or to take, the LCATP. However, if you have concerns about the technology or testing environment in your current location, you may choose to wait until you are in Canada before taking the LCATP.

What do I need to write the LCATP?

To be permitted to write the LCATP, you will need to create an account on the Pathways to Teach Canada portal. You will also need to:

1. offer proof of identity;

2. have a suitable environment in which to complete the test; and

3. have acceptable computer hardware and software to run the testing and proctoring software.

To demonstrate proof of identity, you will need a piece of government-issued identification that contains your photo. Acceptable pieces of identification include:

- a passport
- a driver's license
- a government identity card
- a government of Canada–issued residency card

If you are unsure about whether you meet the identification requirements, please contact Pathways to Teach Canada.

A suitable environment in which to write the test is a private room where you will not be disturbed for the duration of the test. The supervision of and proctoring for the LCATP are quite strict, and instances of external noise, other people in the testing environment, unauthorized software, and so on, could result in an automatic failure on the test.

The room in which you take the test must be free of any teaching or learning materials (e.g., posters on the wall, books, and so on). You should be able to close off the room (e.g., with a lockable door) to prevent unauthorized or inadvertent entry by others. The room should be quiet. A quiet room is not only free of unauthorized external noises, but it also helps you better hear language samples during the listening portion of the test and provide clearer speaking samples on the speaking portion of the test. For more information, please consult the Pathways' policy on test-taker conduct (included in the LCATP Information for Test-Takers).

Finally, the test needs to be completed on a computer (desktop or laptop). Phones, tablets, and Chromebooks are not acceptable. The test-taker must ensure that their computer includes the following software and connected devices:

- one of the following operating systems — Windows 7+, Mac OS X Yosemite 10.10+, Linux Ubuntu 15.04+, Chrome Desktop Computer

- a minimum monitor of 13" (24" monitor recommended), with 720p screen resolution

- a web camera with 720p resolution or better (either integrated or external web cameras are acceptable)

- a headset (wired or Bluetooth is acceptable) or high-quality built-in speaker

- a microphone (integrated headsets/microphones, external microphones, or high-quality built-in microphones are all acceptable)

- Google Chrome web browser

- a reliable and stable internet connection — 300Kbps up/down (minimum); 5Mbps up/down (recommended)

Before the officially scheduled date for the LCATP, you must test your system for compatibility with the testing and proctoring software. This will include a test of internet connectivity as well as of the compatibility of the headset/speaker and microphone for audio feed, the webcam for video feed, and the operating system and software. It is your responsibility to contact Pathways' technical support before your scheduled LCATP date if you encounter any issues while testing your technology.

What if I need accommodations?

Test-takers who need accommodations due to a disability or other circumstance need to notify Pathways to Education in advance of the test. The accommodation policy and process can be found at Pathways' LCATP Accommodation Policy.

The LCATP environment

The LCATP is completed online. The testing software has been custom designed for the LCATP and allows test-takers to use the same environment for all four modalities (writing, speaking, reading, listening). You will be able to access the test directly from your Pathways to Teach Canada portal, using the same login credentials for your Pathways to Teach Canada account.

When you write the test, you will be supervised by an online proctoring service. This service will video record all LCATP attempts as part of the proctoring process. Chat transcripts and click logs are also recorded. Pathways retains these recordings so it can review any reported incidents. To protect the integrity of the test, recordings, transcripts, and click logs are not provided to test-takers.[1]

Before the test begins, the proctor will explain the proctoring process to the test-taker and ask them to use their camera to show the proctor the testing environment. The proctor will also have access to the test-taker's computer to ensure that no unauthorized software is running (e.g., email, Microsoft Office).

Test-takers will be allowed a 15-minute break between modules for snacks, drinks, using the bathroom, and so on. During a module, no breaks are allowed for any reason.

[1] For more information about how Pathways uses information collected during the delivery of the LCATP, see Pathways' privacy policy.

What is special about teachers' use of language?

Education is about communication. Teachers' language use plays a critical role in shaping students' educational experiences. Language is not just a medium of instruction; it is a powerful tool that influences learning, thinking, and understanding.

Effective teachers tailor their language to the cognitive and developmental stages of their students. For younger learners, language is simpler, focusing on basic concepts and concrete examples. As students progress to higher grades, teachers' language becomes more complex, abstract, and nuanced, challenging students to engage with more sophisticated ideas and encouraging deeper critical thinking.

Through thoughtful and skillful use of language, teachers can make complex subjects accessible and interesting. By defining terms, explaining concepts, and describing processes, teachers bridge the gap between unfamiliar material and the student's current knowledge base. This scaffolding supports students as they build new knowledge and connect it with what they already know.

Questions and prompts that invite classifying, comparing, contrasting, and evaluating encourage students to engage actively with the material. Such language use promotes critical thinking, problem solving, and the application of knowledge. It encourages students to move beyond the passive reception of information by involving them directly in the learning process through discussion, debate, and exploration.

Varied language functions — such as stating, reporting, and arguing — help students develop a range of academic skills. For example, stating and reporting improve communication and presentation skills, while arguing and evaluating foster critical-thinking and reasoning abilities. These skills are essential not only for academic success but also for personal and professional life beyond school.

Canada is a multicultural country, and this is reflected by the diverse students whom teachers encounter in Canadian classrooms. Teachers can use language to both reflect and respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of their classrooms. By incorporating different perspectives and contexts, teachers can make learning more inclusive and relevant to the lives of all their students. This helps to build a positive and supportive learning environment where all students feel valued and understood.

The way teachers use language significantly affects the emotional and social development of their students. Language that encourages students to develop their own opinions or inferences, for example, affirms students' perspectives and

experiences, fostering a sense of self-worth and belonging. Teachers can use language to create a supportive environment where students are encouraged to take risks, share ideas, and develop empathy and respect for others.

The strategic use of language by teachers is fundamental to effective teaching and learning. It shapes how students interact with content, with their peers, and with the world around them. Through thoughtful language use, teachers can inspire curiosity, facilitate understanding, promote critical thinking, and support the holistic development of their students.

Table 2 provides examples of how teachers can use language effectively in different subjects, at different grade levels, and for different purposes.

Language use	Primary (4 to 7 years old)	Elementary (8 to 11 years old)	Middle (12 to 14 years old)	High school (15 to 18 years old)
Arguing	"Do plants need sunlight? Let's argue both ways, with reasons for both sides."	"Argue for or against the use of windmills to produce electricity. What are the benefits or drawbacks?"	"Do you agree with the author that genetically modified foods should be banned? Provide evidence from the article to support your position."	"Do you agree with the moral conclusions presented in To Kill a Mockingbird? Argue your position with textual evidence."
Classifying	"Let's put all the storybooks in one pile and the information books in another. Can you sort these books?"	"Classify these words into nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Which category do most of our list words fall into?"	"Categorize these chemical reactions as either endothermic or exothermic. What characteristics help you decide?"	"Classify these elements based on their electron configurations. How are these patterns reflected in the periodic table?"
Comparing/ Contrasting	"How is a square similar to and different from a rectangle? Let's compare their sides."	"Compare and contrast the lifestyles of people living in ancient Rome with those in ancient Egypt."	"What are the key similarities and differences between the governmental systems of the United States and Canada?"	"Compare and contrast the economic theories of Keynesianism and neoliberalism. How do they differ in their approach to fiscal policy?"

Language use	Primary (4 to 7 years old)	Elementary (8 to 11 years old)	Middle (12 to 14 years old)	High school (15 to 18 years old)
Defining	"What does 'community' mean? Can you think of our school as a community?"	"What does 'habitat' mean? Can you give an example of a habitat we've studied?"	"Define 'osmosis' and explain how it is different from diffusion."	"Define 'postmodernism' in art. Can you identify any postmodern elements in the artworks we've studied?"
Describing	"Describe how you feel after running. Are you tired, sweaty, happy?"	"Describe how you solve a division problem with remainders. What does the remainder represent?"	"Describe two strategies you could use in a game of basketball to outmanoeuvre a defender."	"Describe the biomechanics involved in a free-throw shot in basketball. What factors contribute to accuracy?"
Evaluating	"Do you think the story's character was kind? Why or why not?"	"If the soccer ball is here, where would the best place be for you to run to get a pass?"	"Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations in promoting peace."	"Evaluate the long-term effects of colonialism on today's global economic structure."
Explaining	"Can you explain how you know that 7 + 2 cannot be more than 10?"	"Explain the role evaporation plays in the water cycle."	"What is the role of glucose in cellular respiration?"	"Explain the concept of limits in calculus and their importance in understanding continuity."
Inferring	"Looking at the colours in this painting, what mood do you think the artist was in? Can you decide if they were happy or sad?"	"Based on the character's actions, what can we say about their personality?"	"What can we infer about the economic conditions of a country based on its population growth rate?"	"Using the climate data provided, extrapolate a likely global temperature in the year 2100. Clearly state what assumptions you made."

What is the culture of Canadian classrooms?

Canada is a nation of diversity. This diversity is reflected in many ways. Some Canadian schools (especially those in city centres) have students from many different countries and cultures. Other schools serve small populations in remote areas where students

need to travel for hours by bus, or even boat, to get to school. Some schools serve families who are financially secure and can support their children's education by purchasing extra books and supplies, hiring tutors, or funding educational excursions. Other schools are in neighbourhoods where many families have little financial security and struggle to provide such supports. In short, there is no easy way to describe a Canadian classroom because they are so diverse.

However, some common characteristics can be observed across Canadian classrooms. The characteristics described below refer to Canadian public schools. These schools are funded by the government, and children may attend them for free from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Canada also has private schools and independent schools. These schools have far smaller enrolments than public schools and, in contrast to public schools, may require the payment of fees. They typically serve specialized populations, such as students with severe autism, students from a particular religious group, or students from wealthy families.

In Canadian public schools, teachers are well-respected, but it is still permissible for students to question their authority. Thus, it is common for students to ask questions of their teacher or even disagree with them. For instance, if a teacher said "I think Picasso is an artistic genius and the most important artist of the 20th century," it would be permissible for a student to disagree and say that they do not like the works of Picasso. This would not be seen as disrespectful; rather, it would be seen as the student asserting their autonomy and independence of thought.

A foundational value of Canadian education is that all students have the right and the capability to learn. Thus, teachers are expected to attend to the educational needs of all students, regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Further, students with disabilities (e.g., students in wheelchairs, autistic students, students with dyslexia) are included in Canadian classrooms, and teachers are expected to accommodate their learning needs.

Canadian schools have a flat hierarchy, meaning that they have few managers or administrators. The principal is the ultimate authority within the school, and teachers are expected to defer to them. Teachers and principals generally enjoy good working relationships. When a teacher disagrees with a principal, it is permissible for the two to discuss the issue, in a respectful fashion.

Relationships between parents and teachers can be complex and varied. This is partly because Canada is multicultural, and so parents can come from diverse backgrounds and have different cultural norms and expectations about school and teachers. It is

expected that Canadian teachers would address a parent formally, using their last name and an honorific (e.g., "Mr. Lee," "Ms. Wilton"). When communicating with parents about their child, Canadian teachers are expected to note some positive aspects of the child before discussing problems. For instance, a teacher might write in an email, "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Deragopian: Ada continues to be a bright and engaged student in my classroom and is well liked by her peers. Unfortunately, she did not do well on her last spelling test, and so I wanted to contact you."

When communicating with students, Canadian teachers are expected to be calm, encouraging, and supportive. As an example, if a teacher is concerned about a student's frequent tardiness to class, they would be expected to address the issue in a supportive manner. For example, a professional way to address this problem might be along these lines: "Miguel, when you come late to class, it means you miss the opening review activity, and this is not good for your learning. I want you to do well in my class, and so it is important that you are here on time every day. Is there a reason you are not able to get to my class on time?" Saying something punitive, such as "If you come late to class one more time, I am going to fail you," would be considered unprofessional and unsupportive.

In Canadian schools, you will hear a lot about Indigenous education. Indigenous people are the original inhabitants of Canada. There are many different Indigenous cultures within Canada, but they have a common history of suffering and injustice as a result of colonialism. Canadian educators are working diligently to include Indigenous content, ideas, and ways of knowing within the school system. This is being done as a way of addressing the many injustices suffered by Indigenous people in Canada. As a teacher, you will be expected to become familiar with Indigenous cultures in Canada and to include Indigenous content within your teaching. Fortunately, ministries/departments of education and school districts have many resources to help and support you in this task.

The language for effective teaching framework

The LCATP items were all developed using the language for effective teaching framework. This framework lists and explains the diverse language skills that teachers need in order to be effective in their role. The full framework can be found at https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/320/Speaking_for_Excellence.pdf, but this section provides some detail about each of the four modalities (writing, speaking, reading, listening) contained within the framework.

Writing items

In their job, teachers write for diverse purposes and audiences. They write every day for students as part of their instructional practice, write to parents about their child's progress, write to colleagues about professional matters, and write to administrators about their practice or discipline issues. Thus, it is important that teachers are able to write for varied audiences, make appropriate word choices, adjust the tone of their language, and model good writing for their students.

Examples of writing tasks that teachers should be able to accomplish effectively include:

- writing lab instructions for students
- writing a permission letter
- writing comments on a report card
- writing a lesson plan
- taking notes at meetings
- writing emails to parents
- creating a poster listing classroom rules and expectations

Items in the writing module of the LCATP require the test-taker to read a prompt and then construct a written response that addresses the requirements or goals set out in that prompt. Typically, responses are 70 to 250 words in length. It should take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete a writing task. Responses are evaluated based on how well they address the task requirements, on the appropriateness of the tone and vocabulary, and on the correct use of grammar, syntax, and punctuation. The test-taker types their responses, which are then recorded by the testing software. There are usually between 7 and 12 items in the writing module. **No writing aids, such as dictionaries, spell checkers, or grammar checkers are permitted in this portion — or any portion — of the LCATP.**

Speaking items

Speaking is the most common form of communication for teachers. Teachers speak in their classroom to give instructions, explain concepts, and manage student behaviour. They speak to parents, colleagues, and administrators for many different reasons. Thus, it is critical that teachers can communicate effectively via speaking.

Examples of speaking tasks that teachers should be able to accomplish effectively include:

- explaining step-by-step instructions to students so they can complete a learning task
- giving a presentation to a large audience
- asking follow-up questions to student responses
- providing input at staff meetings
- conversing with parents at parent-teacher meetings
- reading aloud
- describing an abstract concept

Items in the speaking module of LCATP require test-takers to read or listen to a prompt and provide a spoken response. The spoken response is recorded by the testing software. This means that the computer used for the LCATP must be connected to a working microphone.

Speaking responses are usually between 1 and 3 minutes long, and test-takers are given 2 to 5 minutes to prepare their response before recording them. If a test-taker is dissatisfied with their response, they may record a new response, but no additional time is given. Evaluation of the speaking response considers how well the response addresses the task requirements; the accuracy of pronunciation; the speaker's grammar and syntax; the appropriateness of vocabulary and tone; fluidity; intelligibility; and pace. As residents of a multicultural country, Canadians are exposed to many different accents, and so accent is **not** a criterion for evaluation. While accent is not evaluated, pronunciation is. Scorers will judge whether a Canadian colleague, student, or parent would likely understand a word as spoken. There are usually between 8 and 13 items in the speaking module.

Reading items

Teachers read many different types of materials. Some reading is of formal documents, such as school policies, research papers, or curriculum guides. In other contexts, teachers read less formal daily communications, including emails from colleagues or memos from teacher associations and, of course, student writing. Thus, teachers need to be able to read and understand texts ranging from academic research to student writing that may contain errors and poor English usage.

Examples of reading tasks that teachers should be able to accomplish effectively include:

- reading and understanding policy, curriculum, and regulatory documents
- reading, understanding, evaluating, and giving feedback on student writing
- reading emails or letters from parents
- reading and evaluating teaching resources

Items in the reading module of the LCATP require test-takers to read a text and then respond to one or more multiple-choice questions related to that text. There are usually between 18 and 25 items in the reading module.

Listening items

Teachers listen to colleagues, administrators, parents, and, most of all, students. Because these speakers use language differently and have different language abilities, it is important that teachers are able to listen to, and comprehend, a broad range of speech. For example, they need to be able to detect errors in grammar, syntax, and logic in sentences uttered by a student, and to understand the key points in formal presentations by experts.

Examples of listening tasks that teachers should be able to accomplish effectively include:

- listening to and assessing the quality of student responses to questions
- listening to and understanding parental concerns
- listening to and following instructions from administrators
- understanding students with different accents and levels of English language proficiency

Items in the listening module of the LCATP require test-takers to listen to a prompt and then respond to one or more multiple-choice questions related to that prompt. This means the test-taker must have access to headphones or speakers with good, clear sound quality. Note that some test centres or environments may require headphones instead of speakers. There are usually between 12 and 15 items in the listening module.

How are responses scored?

Writing

Writing responses are scored by human scorers. Scorers are Canadian teachers who have experience in Canadian classrooms and understand the language skills and proficiencies necessary to be successful as a teacher in Canada. Further, these scorers have undergone a training and quality-control process to ensure they score items correctly. Two scorers independently score each response. For each response, if the pair of assigned scores differ by two or more points, it is considered a scoring disagreement. In such cases, the item, response, scores, and scorer comments will be reviewed by an adjudicator, who will assign the final score. If a pair of assigned scores differ by only one point, the final score is an average of the two scores.

Every writing response is scored on a scale from 0 to 9. This scale is broken down into three different criteria, each of which is scored on a scale from 0 to 3. The three criteria relate to:

- how successfully the response addresses the task requirements;
- how appropriate the writing is for the intended audience; and
- how skillfully the test-taker uses grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and punctuation.

For each criterion, a score of 3 is awarded when the response matches the quality expected of an experienced Canadian teacher. A score of 2 is awarded when the response matches the quality expected from a beginning teacher or someone whose first language is not English. Scores of 1 and 0 are awarded when the response is below acceptable standards for that criterion.

To examine how the scoring criteria are put into action, let's look at some sample writing items and responses that demonstrate different levels of quality.

Sample writing item 1: Write a plan for an outdoor activity that takes place on the school grounds. The plan must describe the activity, how it will be assessed, what safety issues need to be considered, and how students with special needs will be accommodated.

Response 1: We will outside to do science. This will be fun and students will enjoy the activy. We will be safe and students will include.

Response 1 score (0 total):

Addresses task requirements = 0. The response makes some attempt to address the task requirements, but it is not complete enough to receive any points. The reader cannot ascertain what the activity is, what safety issues exist, or how students with special needs will be accommodated.

Appropriate for audience = 0. Lesson plans and activity descriptions are shared with other educators (the intended audience). The language use in this response is simplistic (e.g., sentences start with "We will" and "This will") and not suitable for an adult, educated audience.

Correct language use = 0. Multiple errors impede the understanding of this response. The first sentence is missing the verb "go," while the second sentence is missing a comma after "fun" and contains a spelling mistake. The third sentence is also missing a comma (after "safe"), and the verb "include" is not conjugated or used correctly. Given that this text is too short and has many errors, it merits a 0 on this criterion.

Response 2: We will go outside to count four leaf clovers. This is part of biology. The activity is a safe activity but students will need to wear something warm if it is cold. The school has wheelchair ramps so handicapped students who need a wheelchair can go outside.

Response 2 score (3 total):

Addresses task requirements = 1. The response makes some attempt to address the task requirements, but the description of the activity is minimal, and there is no mention of assessment. The response includes a mention of safety and of students with special needs but does not provide enough detail for the reader to imagine how the activity will take place.

Appropriate for audience = 1. The intended audience for lesson plans and activity descriptions is other educators (e.g., teachers and administrators). The language is specific enough to allow them to gain some understanding of the activity. The language in this response is simple, but the lack of detail makes it borderline simplistic.

Correct language use = 1. The simple text has few errors but does not demonstrate the writer's mastery of English grammar and vocabulary. A comma is missing from the third sentence after "safe activity," and the use of the word "handicapped" reflects out-of-date language usage.

Response 3: This activity is a science activity that is part of the Grade 7 biology unit. This unit focuses on ecology, and so the activity has students counting species variation on the school soccer field. Students will work in pairs and be assigned a 1m2 patch of field. They will then count the number of 3- and 4-leaf clovers contained within that patch. The activity addresses the data collection, recording, and analysis parts of the science curriculum. Students will be assessed by the quality of their data table. Is it neat, complete, and did they correctly calculate the proportion of 3- to 4-leaf clovers?

The activity is generally a safe activity but students will need to wear clothing appropriate to the weather. It is possible that some students will have allergies (e.g., pollen allergies), and they will need to be accommodated as appropriate. Because the soccer field is wheelchair accessible, students with mobility impairments will be able to participate. The hands-on nature of the activity will be beneficial to students with learning difficulties such as ADHD or dyslexia.

Response 3 score (9 total):

Addresses task requirements = 3. The response addresses all of the task requirements in a manner that allows the reader to understand how the activity will take place, how it will be assessed, what the safety issues are, and how students with special needs will be accommodated.

Appropriate for audience = 3. The intended audience for lesson plans and activity descriptions is other educators (e.g., teachers and administrators). The use of education-specific vocabulary (e.g., "curriculum," "impairments") is reasonable and appropriate for that audience.

Correct language use = 3. The text employs sentence structures with multiple clauses and has no grammatical errors. A comma is missing from the first sentence of the second paragraph after "safe activity," but this one error does not seriously detract from the reader's comprehension of the text, and so no point is deducted. The vocabulary (e.g., "mobility impairments," "learning difficulties") reflects currently used terms in education.

Let's look at another sample writing item and responses to better understand what separates different levels of quality.

Sample writing item 2: Mr. Jakuul, the father of Miika, sends you an email asking you to raise Miika's grade. The parent says that Miika is applying to a special program and that they need a higher grade to enhance the likelihood of her being admitted into the program. Write a response explaining why you cannot raise the grade.

Response 1:

Sir,

I can't raise your kid's grade because that would be unfair. Grades are not delivered willy-nilly, and your child didn't do well enough to get a higher grade.

Regretfully, Ms. Abramovic

Response 1 score (2 total):

Addresses task requirements = 0. In this case, the response communicates that the grade will not be raised, but it does not offer any concrete reasons for why this is the case. Further, the language used is likely to offend the parent and cause further conflict.

Appropriate for audience = 0. The opening address of "Sir" is not impolite, but it would be better to use the parent's name (Mr. Jakuul). The emailed response does not use the child's name, and the use of "kid" is informal and appears as glib or dismissive. The response does not have the appropriate respectful tone for communication with a parent.

Correct language use = 2. This response does not contain any obvious grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. However, the use of contractions in a formal email is not consistent with accepted English writing standards, and the use of a term such as "willy-nilly" indicates an extremely poor choice of vocabulary. These shortcomings prevent the response from achieving full marks on this criterion.

Response 2:

Dear Mr. Jakuul,

Thanks for your email. I am happy that Miika is applying to be in special program. I always like it when my students try to go to better programs. While I would like to support Miika, I cannot raise her grade because that would be unfair to the other kids in

the class. I hope you understand.

Regretfully, Ms. Abramovic

Response 2 score (4 total):

Addresses task requirements = 1. This response offers some positive comments about Miika, reducing the likelihood of the response offending the parent. As in response 1, the teacher indicates that the grade will not be raised, but she does not offer any concrete reasons as to why this is the case.

Appropriate for audience = 1. The opening address ("Dear Mr. Jakuul") is appropriate, and the response uses the child's name appropriately as well. The signoff "Regretfully" is appropriate for the content and audience of this email. However, the statement "go to better programs" could easily be interpreted by the parent as suggesting that the current program is of low or inferior quality. The response displays respect for the parent, but the use of "kids" is too informal for such a communication. The short length of the response could be interpreted by the parent as dismissive.

Correct language use = 2. This response is missing the word "a" in the second sentence. While this is possibly a typographical error, any email to a parent on a sensitive subject should be scrutinized carefully for errors. This mistake prevents the response from achieving full marks on this criterion, and so it is awarded a 2.

Response 3:

Dear Mr. Jakuul,

Thanks for your email. I was happy to read that Miika is applying to be in a special program within the district. She is a bright and engaged student and it gladdens me that she is being purposeful in seeking out educational opportunities. To help clarify why I cannot raise Miika grade, I think it would be helpful to explain how that grade was calculated. There were three summative assignments that contributed most to her grade. The first was a research project, the second was a test, and the third was a presentation. Miika did a very good job of writing in her research project, but she relied exclusively on one source (a website). The marking rubric clearly stated that to achieve a top grade, students needed to use three or more reliable sources, including one book.

Her test score was good and demonstrated that she met the curriculum expectations, but she struggled with the multi-step problems. Finally, her presentation was missing the "implications" section, and this prevented her from getting top marks on this assignment.

Cheers, Ms. Abramovic

Response 1 score (7 total):

Addresses task requirements = 3. This response offers specific, concrete reasons for Miika's grades. The teacher includes some positive commentary about Miika, reducing the likelihood of offending the parent.

Appropriate for audience = 2. The opening address ("Dear Mr. Jakuul") is appropriate, and the response uses the child's name appropriately as well. However, the use of "thanks" and the signoff "Cheers" are too casual for the content of this email. Further, the email ends rather abruptly. A final sentence expressing something positive would be expected in an email to a parent.

Correct language use = 2. This response is missing an apostrophe in the fourth sentence (should read "Miika's grade"), and a comma is needed after "engaged student" in the third sentence. While these are minor errors, any email to a parent on a challenging subject should be checked carefully before it is sent. These mistakes prevent the response from achieving full marks on this criterion, and so it is awarded a 2.

Sample writing item 3: Your principal has asked you to write a two-paragraph letter that will be sent to all parents at the school, explaining the advantages and disadvantages of using artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom. Your letter should include a brief description of AI and explain how it may benefit learning and how it may negatively impact learning.

Response 1

Artificial intelligence is computer software that gives answers. This means it does work for your children and they do not learn. Artificial intelligence should not be allowed in schools and we will ban it. This will help your children learn better.

Response 1 score (1 total):

Addresses task requirements = 0. This response offers a description of artificial intelligence, but it is simplistic. The response is only one paragraph in length and does not describe any advantages or benefits of artificial intelligence.

Appropriate for audience = 0. There is no opening address (e.g., Dear parents) and no sign-off. The language is simplistic, reducing confidence in the expertise of the writer.

Correct language use = 1. This response has few errors but it is very short. The meaning of "does work" is ambiguous, and a comma is missing after "schools" in the third sentence.

Response 2

Hello Everyone,

Some people are concerned about artificial intelligence in schools and I wanted to tell you how it help students and how it can hurt students. For those of you that don't know, artificial intelligence is often called AI and it write answers to questions that are so good that is seems like a person wrote it. Obviously, this can be a problem in schools because students can cheat.

However, artificial intelligence can also be useful. Students can use it to answer questions they have and it will give better answers than Google. So, AI is not always bad. At the school, we care about your child's education and are thinking about how to use artificial intelligence.

Sincerely, Mr. Arden

Response 2 score (4 total):

Addresses task requirements = 2. This response offers a description of artificial intelligence that is simple, possibly even simplistic, but no marks were deducted for the definition. There are two paragraphs, but they are short and do not allow the writer to fully express the advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence.

Appropriate for audience = 1. There is an opening address, but "Hello everyone" is too informal for a letter to parents. The sign-off is appropriate. The language is simple,

bordering on simplistic, and some of the word choices, such as "hurt students" or "students can cheat," are likely to cause parents to react negatively. The overall tone is too informal for a communication from the school to parents.

Correct language use = 1. This response demonstrates some ability to use language correctly, but it contains multiple errors. For instance, a comma is missing after "schools" in the first sentence. Also, the phrase "how it help students" is not correct — it appears that the word "can" was omitted. The second sentence has a typo ("is" instead of "it") and a grammatical error ("it write"). Finally, the second sentence of the second paragraph should have a comma after "have."

Response 3

Honoured parents,

I know that many of you are concerned about artificial intelligence and how it might effect student learning. As technology develops, schools need to adapt and this is true with artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGTP provide answers to questions and other written prompts that mimic what a person would write. This can make it difficult to determine whether a student's work is their own or generated by artificial intelligence.

This is not to say that AI has no use in schools. There are ways of using artificial intelligence to make research faster and more trustworthy than by using a single resources such as Google or a book. However, it is critical that we use artificial intelligence to enhance learning and not replace it. To that end, I wanted to reassure you that the school is developing policies surrounding artificial intelligence use that will guarantee student learning is enhanced.

If you have any questions or concerns about this issue, please contact the school at (111) 111-1111.

Thank you,

Mrs. Chandrasekar

Response 3 score (7 total):

Addresses task requirements = 3. This response offers a description of artificial intelligence that is simple and short. It is possibly too short, but no mark was deducted. There are two paragraphs, and the writer concisely expresses one advantage and one disadvantage of artificial intelligence in schools.

Appropriate for audience = 2. In the opening address, "Honoured parents" is perhaps too formal (most communications to parents in Canada would begin "Dear parents"). However, this level of formality is not likely to cause offence, and so no mark is deducted. The sign-off is appropriate. The language is reasonable for the audience, but the use of the word "guarantee" is unreasonable. A better choice would be something like "will promote student learning" or another phrase that does not make an iron-clad promise that may not be kept.

Correct language use = 2. This response demonstrates some ability to use language correctly, but the error of using "effect" instead of "affect" in the first sentence would be noticed by many parents. A comma is needed after "adapt" in the second sentence. There is an agreement error in the phrase "a single resources."

Speaking

As with the writing module, speaking responses are scored by trained human scorers. Scorers are Canadian teachers who have experience in Canadian classrooms and understand the language skills and proficiencies necessary to be successful as a teacher in Canada. Two scorers independently score each response. For each response, if the pair of assigned scores differ by two or more points, it is considered a scoring disagreement. In such cases, the item, response, scores, and scorer comments will be reviewed by an adjudicator, who will assign the final score. If a pair of assigned scores differ by only one point, the final score is an average of the two scores.

Every speaking response is scored on a scale from 0 to 9. This scale is broken down into three different criteria, each of which is scored on a scale from 0 to 3. The three criteria relate to:

- the coherence of the response and how well it addresses the task requirements;
- clarity and pronunciation; and
- how well the speaker uses pace, inflection, and dynamics.

For each criterion, a score of 3 is awarded when the response matches the quality expected of an experienced Canadian teacher. A score of 2 is awarded when the response matches the quality expected from a beginning teacher or someone whose first language is not English. Scores of 1 and 0 are awarded when the response is below acceptable standards for that criterion.

English speakers come from all over the world and possess a variety of accents. As mentioned earlier in the guide, accent is not one of the scoring criteria and does not affect a test-taker's score on the speaking items. Scorers judge speaking responses based on clarity, pronunciation, and intelligibility, not accent.

To familiarize yourself with some speaking items and how responses are scored, see the sample speaking items available below:

Sample speaking item 1:

https://www.pathwaystoteach.ca/sample-speaking-items-and-responses-

Sample speaking item 2:

https://www.pathwaystoteach.ca/sample-speaking-items-and-responses

Sample speaking item 3:

https://www.pathwaystoteach.ca/sample-speaking-items-and-responses_

Fire drill procedure

All members of the school community are expected to be familiar with the fire drill procedure. Fire drills will be conducted several times per year and are designed to ensure everyone is familiar with how to exit the school building safely and quickly.

1. If the fire alarm rings, all classroom activities must stop and students and teachers must be quiet and listen for instructions over the PA system.

2. If instructed to evacuate, students must line up in pairs at the classroom door. Wait there until the teacher has counted all students.

3. Once students are counted, the teacher will instruct you to leave the classroom and tell you which direction to exit the building. Please follow the teacher's instructions!

4. While in the school corridors, ensure you are with your partner and with your class at all times.

5. After leaving the building, go to the assigned meeting point for your class on the north side of the soccer field (the side farthest from the school).

Reading

The reading module is a multiple-choice test that is machine scored (0 for an incorrect response, 1 for a correct response) by XpressLab testing software.

To familiarize yourself with the reading items, let's look at some sample reading items.

Sample reading items 1 and 2: Please read the passage below and answer questions 1 and 2.

Teachers need subject-specific and curricular knowledge, pedagogical and classroom-management skills, and contextual awareness and understanding of their students. In the classroom, teachers use language both as a medium for and object of instruction. They require language skills that include knowledge of the structures and functions of language, as well as fluency (in speaking, writing, listening, and reading), and the ability to teach these same skills to their students. Teachers must be able to modulate their use of language to accommodate the diverse levels of language proficiency their students bring to the classroom.

Teachers require a good command of two language registers: the formal academic language of schooling, and informal language that allows for effective communication and personal connections with students, parents, and colleagues. Teachers must also have mastery of the four language modalities: speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

Question 1:

What do the authors mean when they say that "teachers use language both as a medium for and object of instruction"?

a) It is important that teachers use language well.

b) Teachers will teach English as a subject and also use English to communicate information about other subjects.

c) Teachers must select appropriate objects and other instructional resources.

d) Teachers communicate via language only.

Question 2

In the statement "Teachers must be able to modulate their use of language," what does the word "modulate" mean?

a) Teachers must serve as language role models.

b) Teachers must be able to make their voice loud or soft.

c) Teachers must be able to correct the language mistakes of their students.

d) Teachers must be able to adapt their language use so all students can understand them.

The correct answer to question 1 is b). Using "language as a medium" means using language to communicate ideas, while using language as an "object of instruction" means teaching about language in their classroom. As an example, a science teacher uses English to explain how photosynthesis works but also teaches students about unfamiliar scientific terms and the history and roots of these words.

The correct answer to question 2 is d). The word "modulate" can have several different meanings in English. In this case, it is being used to communicate the idea that because students have varying levels of English proficiency, teachers need to be able to use simple or more complex language to express ideas, depending on the language ability of the student.

Sample reading items 3 and 4: Please read the passage below and answer questions 3 and 4.

The problem-solving strategy is a student-centred approach that engages learners in defining the nature of a real-life problem and then identifying, prioritizing, and selecting approaches to its solution. The process concludes with students evaluating the application of solutions and their outcomes. Research indicates that students acquire new knowledge more effectively when they actively participate in the learning process

rather than passively absorbing knowledge disseminated by the teacher. Learning can be very rich when the learning environment provides a natural setting for students to present various solutions to their group or class, learning through social interactions, negotiating meaning, and reaching shared understandings. Such activities help students to verbally clarify, express, and justify their ideas as well as acquire different perspectives about the concept or idea they are learning. By learning through problem solving, students have more opportunities to engage with cognitively demanding questions and to reason and discuss ideas and meanings. Teachers adopting a problem-solving approach ask more conceptually oriented questions (e.g., by asking students to describe a strategy or explain their underlying reasoning for obtaining an answer) and fewer recall questions than do teachers in classrooms without a primary focus on problem solving.

Question 3

The problem-solving strategy demands that:

   a) students work collaboratively.

   b) students find the correct answer to a problem.

   c) students identify potential solutions to a problem.

   d) students work in natural settings.

Question 4

One advantage of the problem-solving strategy is that:

   a) teachers who use it ask fewer rote questions and a greater number of higher-order thinking questions.

   b) students do better on tests.

   c) teachers and students can be more productive in the classroom.

   d) teachers disseminate knowledge more effectively.

The correct answer to question 3 is c). It is the only response that is required by the problem-solving strategy: the other responses are all possible, but not required.

The correct answer to question 4 is a). In this case, "rote" is a synonym for "recall," and "higher-order thinking" is another way of describing "conceptual" questions.

Listening

The listening module is a multiple-choice test that is machine scored (0 for an incorrect response, 1 for a correct response) by XpressLab testing software.

In the listening module, you will be asked to listen to a sample of somebody speaking English and then to answer some questions. Because Canada is a multicultural nation, it is important that teachers are able to understand different accents, and so it is possible you will encounter different accents in the listening items.

To familiarize yourself with the listening items and how responses are scored, see the sample listening items available below:

Sample listening item 1 and 2:

https://www.pathwaystoteach.ca/sample-listening-items-and-responses

Sample listening item 3 and 4:

https://www.pathwaystoteach.ca/sample-listening-items-and-responses

When will I get my results?

LCATP scores are communicated to test-takers within 15 business days of their submitting the test. You will receive a Results Summary with your score for each module. The Results Summary will confirm whether you met the minimum required score for each module. To pass the LCATP, you must obtain the minimum required score or higher in all four modules.

To protect test integrity, the scoring details of each item will not be provided.

What is a passing score?

Table 3 gives a description of the proficiency level that is represented by a passing score for each modality.

Table 3. Proficiency descriptions associated with passing scores for each modality

Modality	Description
Writing	Test-takers can: • write coherent formal and informal texts that synthesize and evaluate complex information and ideas from multiple sources; and • present information in a variety of written forms (e.g., tables, graphs, charts, slides).
Reading	Test-takers can fluently read a variety of printed forms, demonstrating high-level comprehension, critical appraisal, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis.
Speaking	Test-takers can: • participate in formal and informal conversational exchanges in a broad range of situations, using technical or non-technical language; • lead and manage a variety of conversational exchanges appropriate to the purpose and audience; and • fluently read aloud a variety of general, literary, and specialized/technical texts.
Listening	Test-takers can listen to and comprehend a variety of forms of speech. These include formal and informal oral speech from adults and students, and speech that includes technical language related to education.

To pass the LCATP, test-takers must achieve a passing score on all four modalities (writing, speaking, reading, listening). Achieving very high scores on three modalities but failing the fourth will result in an overall failing grade for the LCATP. For test-security reasons, there are multiple versions of the LCATP. This is common practice in high-stakes tests such as the LCATP. For all versions of the LCATP, the minimum passing score has been determined through a combination of rigorous statistical analysis and guidance from language and education experts. Thus, all passing scores represent the same level of English language proficiency in the context of teaching.

For each modality, a minimum scale score of 60 is needed to pass. Scale scores are calculated using a precise formula based on the number and difficulty of test items. This ensures that an equivalent scale score represents equivalent levels of language ability, regardless of the version of the test that was taken. A general rule that test-takers can use is that they will need to get approximately 75 percent or more of the items correct.

If a test-taker does not respond to an item, they will receive a score of 0 on that item. Scores of 0 for such items are included in a test-taker's total score. Thus, if a test-taker achieved the maximum raw score (i.e., 9 points) on 6 speaking items, but did not respond to the 6 other speaking items, they would score a total of 54 points (9 points x 6) on the first 6 items and 0 points on the next 6 items for a total raw score of 54 out of 108.

What happens if I do not pass?

Test-takers who are not successful on the LCATP are eligible to rewrite it. They may register to retake the test as soon as they have received the results of their latest test. Rewrites count as a new registration, and so the entire registration process needs to be repeated, including payment of a new registration fee. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may take the LCATP.

If a candidate rewrites the LCATP, the most recent score is considered the final score. This is true regardless of whether this score is lower or higher than, or the same as, any previous scores.

What if I think my score is not correct?

If you believe your score is not correct or there were errors in the scoring, please review the Pathways' policy on Rescoring Requests (included in the LCATP Information for Test-Takers).

What if there is an incident that affects the test?

While they are rare, it is possible that different incidents can affect the testing process. Please review the Pathways' policy on test security and incidents (included in the LCATP Information for Test-Takers).

Accommodations: In a testing context, "accommodations" refers to changes or adaptations made to the test or the environment to avoid disadvantaging test-takers with disabilities or other special needs. Examples of accommodations may include extended time, use of text-to-speech software (screen reader), or a scribe (someone who writes down the test-taker's answers).

Audience: The audience is the person or people to whom a communication is directed. Thus, in an email to a parent, the parent is the audience. In a speech to the teaching staff, teachers are the audience. When a teacher is explaining classroom rules, students are the audience.

Cut score: This is the minimum score needed to pass a test or assessment. For the LCATP, the cut score for each module is 60. This means that test-takers must have a scale score of 60 or higher on each module to pass the test.

Department of Education: See Ministry of Education.

Diversity: "Diversity" is a term used to recognize the many different types of students in Canadian classrooms. Common forms of diversity that are discussed in Canadian education are racial diversity, cultural diversity, gender diversity, sexual orientation, and neural diversity. Canadian teachers are expected to honour and celebrate different forms of diversity within the classroom.

Elementary education: The term "elementary education" refers to the first seven to nine years of schooling. The exact age range and grades included change depending on the province, but elementary education always starts with Kindergarten and ends in Grade 6, 7, or 8. Students start elementary education when they are four or five years old.

High school: High school is also called secondary school in Canada. High schools serve an adolescent population. Depending on the province, high school starts in Grade 7, 8, or 9 and ends in either Grade 11 or 12. It is the final phase of publicly funded, mandatory schooling for Canadian children. Students in Grade 12 are typically 17 or 18 years old.

Inclusion: Inclusion is an educational philosophy that believes that all students should be included in regular classrooms and given supports to enable them to be successful in those classrooms. For example, Canadian classrooms will typically have students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia or attention deficit disorder. Students with physical disabilities (e.g., students in wheelchairs) are also included in Canadian classrooms. Teachers are expected to accommodate the learning needs of many different types of students.

Indigenous: "Indigenous" is an umbrella adjective used to describe the first peoples of Canada, as well as their knowledge, culture, language, art, and experiences. Many different nations and cultures fall under the category "Indigenous." Indigenous people arrived in what is now Canada thousands of years before European settlers. Thus, they have a long and rich history on the continent. Over the past few hundred years, Indigenous peoples have been subject to many injustices arising from colonization, and Canadian schools played a major role in perpetrating some of those injustices. Consequently, the Canadian education system is now trying to find ways of addressing past wrongs and improving educational quality and outcomes for Indigenous students while integrating Indigenous content, ideas, and ways of knowing throughout the curriculum.

Incident: In the present context, an "incident" is any event that could threaten the validity of a test score. Examples of incidents include, but are not limited to, test-taker conduct that compromises the validity or reliability of the test, and technological or environmental irregularities that are outside the test-taker's control.

Internationally educated teacher (IET): IETs are teachers who have completed their teacher education program outside of Canada.

K–12 education: Public school starts when students are four or five years old (depending on the province). The earliest grade is called Kindergarten. Grade 1 students are five or six years old, and every year students move up a grade. The final grade of public schooling is generally Grade 12, with students who are 17 or 18 years old. The term "K–12 education" is used to signify all levels of public schooling before postsecondary education.

LCATP: LCATP is the initialism for Language Competency Assessment for the Teaching Profession and is the official test name.

Middle school: Some provinces and local school districts have middle schools. Middle schools serve learners in late childhood to early adolescence. Typically, middle school students are in Grades 6 to 9 and are from 10 to 14 years of age.

Ministry of Education: Education is a provincial responsibility in Canada. Thus, there is no national education system, and each of the 10 provinces and 3 territories manages its own education system. The government department responsible for managing the education system is called the "Ministry of Education" or "Department of Education."

Modality: In the context of LCATP, "modality" refers to one of the four main ways in which language is expressed or received. The four language modalities on the LCATP are reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Module: The LCATP has four modules. A module is the portion of the test that focuses on a single language modality. Test-takers are given 60 minutes to complete each module.

Pathways to Teach Canada: Pathways to Teach Canada is the organization responsible for administering the LCATP. This includes the registration, scoring, and appeals processes.

Practicum: A practicum is teaching experience gained as part of a teacher education program. Practicum experiences are usually (but not always) unpaid teaching conducted under the supervision of an experienced teacher. Other terms for practicum include internship and practice teaching.

Primary school: The term "primary school" is usually used to indicate the early grades of elementary school — often Kindergarten to Grade 3. Students will range in age from four or five in Kindergarten to seven or eight in Grade 3.

Proctoring: Proctoring is the process of supervising a test-taker during the test to ensure that they are following the test rules and procedures properly. The LCATP proctoring process includes supervision by a person (the proctor), the use of proctoring software, and other processes designed to detect cheating or other irregularities.

Reliability: "Reliability" refers to the likelihood that a test-taker would have the same test outcome under different conditions. As an example, a test-taker's score should be the same regardless of who scores the test or what version of the test the test-taker writes. The LCATP has undergone multiple rounds of evaluation to ensure that it is reliable and has robust processes to ensure scorers are consistent and fair.

Scaled score: A scaled score is a representation of the total number of questions a test-taker has answered correctly (raw score) that has been converted to a consistent and standardized scale. Test-takers must achieve a scale score of 60 or higher in each of the four modules to pass the assessment. Passing the assessment means that test-takers have demonstrated an acceptable level of competency in each of the four modalities.

Secondary school: See High school.

Validity: "Validity" refers to a test's ability to give useful information about a test-taker's knowledge or abilities. Threats to validity can include cheating, poor test design, or improperly trained scorers. The LCATP has been the subject of two validity studies, and experts have determined it to be a well-designed test that accurately assesses language skills needed for teaching.