Background:
The TOPSS is designed to assess the speaking and presentation skills proficiency of international Teaching Assistants (ITAs) at Lehigh University. This assessment measures the spoken fluency of non-native English speaking instructional personnel in order to remain in compliance with the English fluency act of 1990, PA Act 76. The scores of this assessment can only be used for ITA placements at Lehigh University and are non-transferrable to other institutions. The scores are only valid for two years.

Prior to the assessment, you will be given a presentation topic from your department faculty. You must prepare this topic to make a 15-20-minute “teaching” presentation. At the end of the 15-20 minutes, there will be a 10-minute question/answer period for the participants to ask questions. A Powerpoint presentation is required to help you stay on track and to provide your audience with a visual representation of the vocabulary and complex content. You will be given at least 48 hours to prepare the presentation. The presentation will be reviewed by ESL professionals and faculty members from your department. After you finish your TOPSS presentation, you will be excused from the room, and the ESL professionals and your department faculty will determine your score and any English course recommendations and/or requirements as needed. Your results will be emailed to you within two weeks after your take your TOPSS. To retain your TA status, you must successfully complete the English coursework and any other requirements during the semester immediately following the TOPSS to remain in compliance with Act 76.

Speaking/Listening Assessment:
With regards to your speaking and listening, you will be assessed in the following four areas: functional, sociolinguistic, linguistic, and listening ability. Each of these four areas is explained below. The four scores are averaged together to determine your overall speaking and listening score, and qualitative comments are included to provide instructive feedback to help you improve.

Presentation and Teaching Skills Assessment:
With regards to your presentation and teaching skills, there are four areas that are assessed as explained below. Each of these areas is explained below. The four scores are averaged to determine your overall presentation skills score, and qualitative comments are included to provide instructive feedback to help you improve.

What happens if I do not pass?
If you do not pass the TOPSS, you will be required to complete English coursework to improve your speaking and presentation skills. You will be required to retake the TOPSS again at the end of your required English coursework. If you have any questions, please contact the ESL Office at inesl@lehigh.edu or 610-758-6099.
Description of Speaking and Listening Skills:

1. **Functional Ability:**
   Student completes task by choosing appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic language to complete the task.

2. **Linguistic Ability:**
   Student’s response contains clear pronunciation, intonation, pausing, verb agreement, tense, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

3. **Sociolinguistic Ability:**
   Student understands inference and subtle changes in tone and can use changes in volume, intonation, body language, and tone to persuade/communicate with the listener.

4. **Listening Ability:**
   Student understands and comprehends questions, complex wording, and vocabulary of natural native-speaker speech.

Description of Presentation and Teaching Skills:

1. **Introduction and “Hook”**
   Was the topic clearly introduced?
   Are the objectives clear?
   Did you have an attention-getting opener?
   Was the topic of presentation/lecture/lab clear?

2. **Organization and Coherence**
   Was there clear progression of objectives?
   Were the details introduced and supported with relevant and logical examples?

   **Linking Words and Phrases**
   Were the parts connected well with transitions?
   Were simple and complex connectors used?

   **Conclusion**
   Did the student reiterate and restate topic
   Were there smooth transitions, and not an abrupt ending?

3. **Questions & Answers**
   Did the student respond to all questions?
   Did the student answered questions thoroughly?
   Did the student check audience understanding by asking if anyone had questions?

4. **Presentation Skills:**
   **Eye Contact**
   Was the student’s eye contact focused on the audience (not reading)?
   Did the presenter engage with audience by making regular eye contact with them?

   **Gestures, Body, and Expressions**
   Did the student use friendly, clear facial expressions?
   The student used no distracting movements that caused disruption to the presentation.
   Did the student seemed relaxed in stance and posture or rushed and nervous?

   **Voice & Volume**
   Was the student’s volume too loud or too soft?
   Was the speech smooth, and non-halting?

   **Pace**
   Was the overall presentation too fast or too slow?

   **Powerpoint / Boardwork**
   Did the student use PPT and the board effectively?