PBLA Practice Guidelines FAQ 2019-2020

Portfolios – Content and Management

QUESTION	ANSWER
What is the recommended pace of teaching and assessment for PBLA? i.e. How many hours of teaching should there be for each artefact?	PBLA does not require or mandate a specific number of hours of teaching prior to each skill-using or assessment task. Each provider determines the expected pace of teaching and assessment for their program, by deciding the timeframe for classes to produce a particular number of artefacts. Some examples from different providers: 6 artefacts per month, 32 artefacts in 250 hours, 20 artefacts per reporting period, etc. Providers should consider that learners need sufficient instructional hours to demonstrate progress. For PBLA, the goal is to build learners' abilities to complete tasks in the real world. Skill-building activities teach and provide practice on grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic elements of tasks. Skill-using tasks allow the learners to practice skills and gain specific direction to help them improve. When learners are ready, an assessment task allows them to demonstrate what they can now do while still continuing to provide feedback to move them forward. Meaningful teaching and learning take time. Learners need to understand, practice and integrate new information and skills and become prepared to demonstrate acquired abilities. Other factors may impact pacing in a class, such as class size, hours of class per week, rates of literacy, trauma and health issues, the age range and individual motivations of learners, and whether learners are employed in an English or French environment or are otherwise immersed in the community. Links **PBLA Practice Guidelines** -reporting periods for Learner Progress Reports https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/reporting-periods/
Are a "task" and an "activity" the same?	Current PBLA Practice Guidelines refer to "skill building activities," "skill using tasks" and "assessment tasks." Skill-building activities are learning activities to develop form and discrete aspects of language and are kept in "My Notes." Skill-using tasks provide practice in developing fluency and negotiating meaning in real world tasks while assessment tasks assess ability under consistent, test-like conditions; both skill-using and assessment tasks can be added to "My Portfolio" as artefacts. Note that the term "skill-using activities" is no longer in use.
How can a teacher be sure they are evaluating learners the same as another teacher in the same level?	Calibrating learners' work against CLB expectations is an important activity for programs to regularly engage in. Standard 6c of the PBLA Practice Review Framework suggests teachers should discuss learners' work with colleagues to align their judgement of CLB levels. Providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate and engage in benchmark calibration sessions helps ensure learners in the same level receive consistent results.

	CCLB provides Professional Learning Sessions (PLS) on writing calibration: <u>CLB Calibration and Action Oriented Feedback: Writing CLB 2-4</u>, and <u>CLB Calibration and Action Oriented Feedback: Writing CLB 4-6</u>. Lead Teachers can help classroom teachers calibrate other skill areas using the PLS <u>PBLA Portfolio Review Process (Revised 2019).</u> <u>Links</u> **PBLA Practice Guidelines** -PBLA Practice Review Framework https://pblapg.language.ca/part-d-pbla-accountability-sharing-responsibility-for-success/supplement-1-pbla-practice-framework/
How many skill-using tasks can be included in the 8 to 10 artefacts needed for an evaluation?	The balance of sufficient artefacts in a skill area does not include a fixed number or percentage of skill-using versus assessment tasks. If the number of skill-using versus assessment tasks making up the composition of 8 to 10 artefacts provides enough information to determine a learner is meeting or not meeting benchmark expectations in a skill area, then the balance is acceptable. For support on designing skill-using tasks that can be included in portfolios, Lead Teachers can deliver the Professional Learning Session <u>Exploring Skill using Tasks (Revised 2019)</u> to classroom teachers. Other relevant PLS: <u>Building Portfolios (Revised 2019)</u> and <u>PBLA Portfolio Review Process (Revised 2019)</u>. An example of a specific type of program and needs of learners can be found in the PLS <u>ESL Literacy Expectations.</u> Note that the balance of skill-using versus assessment tasks may differ for literacy versus mainstream learners in Reading and Writing. An example can be found in the PLS <u>ESL Literacy Expectations.</u> <u>Links</u> **PBLA Practice Guidelines** -the balance of skill-using tasks vs assessment tasks https://pblapg.language.ca/part-b-pbla-portfolios-key-elements/portfolio-artefacts-considerations/:
Can samples of learners' work completed outside class be included in the portfolio as an artefact (skill-using or assessment task)? e.g. a diary entry, a reading done at home, documents completed at work, etc.	PBLA was designed as a classroom-based approach to assessment. For inclusion as an artefact in a face-to-face classroom, language produced or understood by learners, including any support needed by the learners, must be observed by the classroom instructor. Language produced or understood outside class that is self-reported by learners and not observed by the instructor is still valuable for understanding learners' progress and consistency of language use. Evidence such as certificates from employment training or other courses, diary entries or other real world language examples, etc., can be referred to as anecdotal evidence of learner ability during a portfolio evaluation and may be included in "Other." Anecdotal evidence is not counted as artefacts.

	For online and blended classes, providers must have protocols in place to ensure artefacts for inclusion in portfolios meet expectations for validity. Links PBLA Practice Guidelines -documented observations https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/making-judgements-about-portfolio-contents/
For the 3 levels of comprehension (literal, interpretive, applied) how many questions must be asked in each category for a listening or reading assessment?	There is no fixed number or percentage of questions required for each level of comprehension in receptive tasks. Rather the CLB document provides indicators of ability which align with levels of comprehension expected to be demonstrated at each CLB level. For example, at Stage 1 the indicators of ability are weighted toward literal and inferential levels of comprehension, and at stage 2 are weighted toward inferential and applied levels. Broadly, comprehension questions should address at least two levels of comprehension for CLB 2 and above. For more support on designing receptive tasks for PBLA, Lead Teachers can deliver the Professional Learning Session Developing Receptive Tasks: A Refresher to classroom teachers.
What is an "observation record" and where can one be found?	A observation record is a way for a teacher to keep track of CLB-aligned evidence of individual learner ability in listening and speaking that occurs in class outside of skill-using and assessment tasks, in order to provide documented observation evidence for evaluation. It is not mandatory to keep an observation record and PBLA does not provide an official observation record template. Links PBLA Practice Guidelines -documented observations https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/making-judgements-about-portfolio-contents/

Reporting – Evaluating and assigning Benchmarks

QUESTION	ANSWER
How much evidence is needed to validate a CLBPT score as a completed benchmark?	Designation of a CLB/NCLC level is directed by the funder in Operational Bulletin 472A Modified. From this, the evidence needed to validate a CLBPT score in a skill-area as a completed benchmark is the same as that needed to determine a completed benchmark in a skill-area when the learner is potentially progressing to a higher completed CLB level: aiming at 8 to 10 artefacts (balance of skill-using and assessment tasks).

	i.e. 8 to 10 artefacts (balance of skill-using and assessment tasks) at CLB 3 are required to validate a CLBPT score of CLB 3. Links Operation Bulleting 472A Modified -the designation of a CLB/NCLC level https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/bulletins-2017/472-modified-february-28-2017.html
Along with sufficient artefacts, how many hours of instruction are required before a learner's portfolio can be evaluated to assign new benchmarks?	The number of hours of instruction before evaluation of a full portfolio must be reasonable for learners to gain sufficient artefacts (aiming at 8 to 10 artefacts per skill area including a balance of skill-using and assessment tasks) and to make progress toward completing a benchmark level. Evidence suggests 250 hours is the minimum for partial progress toward completing a benchmark level. Programs should consider that learners may need more than the minimum 250 hours to complete a full benchmark. Note that PBLA does not mandate evaluation schedules. Providers decide if a portfolio evaluation can only be done when there is a full portfolio (all four skill areas have sufficient evidence) or if an evaluation can be done on a partial portfolio (only one, two or three skill areas have sufficient evidence). Links PBLA Practice Guidelines -progress report and conference schedules https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/reporting-periods/
Can a learner skip a benchmark? E.g. If they have a placement of CLB 3 in listening and are in a LINC 5 class, can they be assigned CLB 5 in listening, or do they have to first complete CLB 4?	A learner does not need to progress in sequential order through the CLB levels, nor always have completed benchmarks/a LINC certificate in a lower level before being placed in the next higher level to begin learning. A learner from a lower CLB level without sufficient evidence for a portfolio evaluation can be placed in a higher CLB level as the best level for learning without changing benchmarks in iCARE and without issuing a LINC certificate. If there is sufficient evidence that a learner can consistently demonstrate success in a higher level than is usually indicated by the placement benchmark, that CLB level can be assigned regardless of the placement benchmark. i.e. If the learner in the example with CLB 3 in listening from a CLBPT is placed in a CLB 5 class and is able with sufficient evidence to consistently demonstrate CLB 5 ability in listening, a completed CLB 5 in listening can be assigned.

How long is an artefact valid? **E.g. If a learner returns to a class after a 9-month absence, do the artefacts in the portfolio from before their absence count toward the 8 to 10 needed for an evaluation?**	Currently, artefacts do not have a predetermined expiry date. Artefacts are valid as long as the recorded indications of success reflect the learner's current abilities. If a learner returns from a period of absence, the teacher can compare current artefacts with artefacts from before the absence to determine if the indications of success still reflect the learner's abilities. If they do, they can be counted toward the sufficient evidence needed for an evaluation of a skill area. Programs can assist teachers by developing a clear, step-by-step protocol for addressing these situations when they occur.
What is the process for evaluating a learner portfolio?	The process for evaluating a portfolio is outlined in the PBLA Practice Guidelines. The process is also reviewed in the Professional Learning Session **PBLA Portfolio Review Process**. **Links** **PBLA Practice Review Guidelines** –making judgements about portfolio contents https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/making-judgements-about-portfolio-contents/
How is a skill-using task counted during a portfolio evaluation if there are no criteria or measure of success on the task sheet?	Skill-using tasks must reference CLB criteria. If the criteria for the task has not been included on the task sheet or copied by the learner, the teacher should refer to their own record of the criteria for that skill-using task. Teachers should consider the comments about what was successful and what to be improved to contribute to a picture of the learner's progress when reviewing skill-using tasks during an evaluation. **Links** **PBLA Practice Guidelines** -sharing criteria with learners for skill-using tasks https://pblapg.language.ca/part-b-pbla-portfolios-key-elements/feedback-and-assessment/
If a learner has enough evidence (aiming at 8 to 10 skill-using and assessment tasks) but is not successful in a skill area, do we give them a progress report?	A progress report and learner conference are always given following an evaluation, regardless of the results of the evaluation. If the learner is not successful in a skill area, what will be recorded as the result on the progress report depends on whether the learner is new with benchmarks from assessment centre, or continuing with benchmarks assigned by a previous teacher. **Links** **PBLA Practice Guidelines**

QUESTION	ANSWER
	-Reporting Progress in iCARE and PBLA https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/supplement-5-reporting-progress-in-icare-and-pbla/

Supporting learners - literacy, additional support requirements, multi-level classes

QUESTION	ANSWER
What is the process for assigning or removing a literacy designation (an "L") from a learner's CLB level?	While programs and teachers have experience with literacy and literacy learners, at present, only a trained CLB assessor using an approved literacy placement test can assign a literacy ("L") designation. The CCLB has asked IRCC for clarification on whether teachers or programs can assign or remove a literacy designation and the evidence needed and process to be followed if they can do so.
What benchmarks are literacy learners (Foundation to CLB 4L) working toward? How much evidence is needed to assign a completed benchmark to a literacy learner?	As guided by the National Placement and Progression Guidelines (page 4) and the ESL for ALL document (page 1), all learners including literacy learners are working toward the benchmark that is one level higher than their placement designation. A learner with a Literacy-Foundation designation in Reading and Writing is working toward CLB 1 in those skill areas and will achieve a designation of CLB 1L when complete, with the L indicating the continuing need for literacy accommodations as guided by the ESL for ALL document. Similarly, a learner with a completed CLB 2L is working towards CLB 3L. Sufficient evidence per skill area (aiming toward 8 to 10 artefacts: balance of skill-using and assessment tasks) is needed to determine a completed benchmark for all learners. Note that the balance of skill-using versus assessment tasks may differ for literacy versus mainstream learners in Reading and Writing. An example can be found in the PLS ESL Literacy Expectations. Further guidance on building Literacy Portfolios can be found in Part 1 Literacy Series: Literacy Tasks Analysis Part 2 Literacy Series: Literacy Portfolio Expectations Part 3 Literacy Series: Identifying Learners' ESL Literacy Needs Links National Placement and Progression Guidelines -https://www.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/National_Placement_Guidelines_2014-1.pdf
What accommodations can be made for literacy learners during listening and reading skill-using or assessment tasks?	The ESL for ALL Support Kit outlines accommodations and adaptations for literacy learners doing skill-using and assessment tasks in all skill areas. For receptive tasks, for example, questions may be asked orally and answers recorded by the teacher or teacher assistant.

	Further guidance can be found in the Professional Learning Sessions Literacy Series: Part 1 Literacy Series: Literacy Task Analysis Part 2 Literacy Series: Literacy Portfolio Expectations Part 3 Literacy Series: Identifying Learners' ESL Literacy Needs
What can be done to help overwhelmed literacy learners keep their portfolios organized?	Scheduling, routine and taking time to organize portfolios in class are helpful for all learners to build autonomy, and are essential for literacy learners. Further guidance can be found in the Professional Learning Session Part 2 Literacy Series: Literacy Portfolio Expectations (slide 22).
What should be done with a learner who may have an undiagnosed learning disability?	First of all, a distinction must be made between a learning disability and a learning difficulty. A learning disability is a neurological disorder. Teachers without specialized training should not attempt to diagnose or teach to a suspected learning disability in a learner. A referral to an agency specializing in learning disabilities should be made for the learner. By contrast, learning difficulties may be associated with literacy needs, age, trauma, health, stress or other factors. Learners with learning difficulties may require more individual attention and time to understand information and demonstrate gains in skills. Program support should be sought to address learners with learning difficulties. For example, volunteers or teaching assistants may be provided, or the learner may be referred to other local resources or agencies for support. Reference -article on learning difficulties: Identification, Assessment, and Instruction of English Language Learners with Learning Difficulties in the Elementary and Intermediate Grades, A guide for educators in Ontario school boards (March, 2014) by Vicki Adelson, Esther Geva, and Christie Fraser
What is the expectation for number of levels to assess in a class?	The number of levels of assessment in a class is negotiated between a provider and the funder based on the demographics of the area. IRCC guidelines state that where possible, teachers are not expected to assess more than 3 CLB levels. The National Placement and Progression Guidelines provides guidance in placing learners in integrated courses that cover all four language skills (generally, a single level of assessment in all four skill areas). There are Professional Learning Sessions on Supporting Learner Progress and Multilevel Assessment to help teachers when multilevel assessment is required to meet the demographic needs of an area or to benefit learners. Links PBLA Practice Guidelines -PBLA Practice Review Framework https://pblapg.language.ca/part-d-pbla-accountability-sharing-responsibility-for-success/supplement-1-pbla-practice-framework/

	National Placement and Progression Guidelines -learner placement in Courses https://www.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/National_Placement_Guidelines_2014-1.pdf
Can a learner be working toward a higher and lower CLB level in one skill area at the same time? **E.g. in a LINC 3/4 class, can a learner do skill-using and assessments at both CLB 3 and CLB 4 in writing? When it is time for evaluation are both levels evaluated? Separately or together?**	**Learners can only work toward a single CLB level in any skill area at one time (the single CLB level could be different in different skill areas in a class with multilevel assessment).** **For the learner in the example, the learner should not be trying to complete CLB 3 and CLB 4 at the same time. Either the learner is ready to be consistently successful at CLB 4 and should be working toward that level, or she should be working toward the original level of placement, in this case CLB 3. Allowing the learner to constantly reach for a level she is not yet ready for creates undue stress and may result in the learner losing rather than gaining confidence in their abilities. As only one level of artefact can be used to determine completed benchmarks during an evaluation, there is no advantage to constantly allowing a learner to work beyond their placement level if they are not yet ready to be consistently successful at that level.** **That being said, in a multilevel class, during skill-using and assessment, lower level learners may attempt the higher level requirements after completing the lower level requirements of a task. If this is the case, the teacher should ensure the learners clearly know the CLB level that they are working toward and that will be evaluated at reporting time when there is sufficient evidence. If over time it becomes apparent that a learner is ready to be consistently successful at tasks at the higher level and should in fact be working toward completion of that level instead of the lower level, the teacher should have a discussion with the learner to ensure they are agreement. If the learner agrees and is clear that they will now be working toward the higher level, the learner should only be given the higher level skill-using and assessment tasks.**
How are multilevel listening and reading assessments scored?	**Multilevel assessment requires aligning the task criteria to each CLB level assessed. A different number of correct answers to the same set of comprehension questions is not acceptable to determine success in a task for different CLB levels.** **Guidance on designing receptive tasks can be found in the Professional Learning Session (PLS) Developing Receptive Tasks: A Refresher.** **Guidance on developing multilevel assessment can be found in the PLSs Multilevel Assessment: The Basics and Multilevel Assessment: Developing Productive skills tasks Part 1 and Part 2. Multilevel modules found in the PBLA Practice Guidelines Resources tab provide examples of differentiated assessment for various multilevel classes.** **Further reading on multilevel assessment can be found in Chapter 5 of Integrating CLB Assessment into Your Classroom (ICLBA): Adapting Assessment for Multilevel Classrooms**

	Links
	PBLA Practice Guidelines **-multilevel modules** https://pblapg.language.ca/part-e-classroom-and-professional-learning/multilevel-modules/ **Integrating CLB Assessment into Your Classroom (ICLBA)** **-Chapter 5** https://iclba.language.ca/chapter-5-adapting-assessment-for-multi-level-classrooms/

Accountability – Roles and responsibilities administrators and Lead Teachers, Practice Review Framework

QUESTION	ANSWER
What CLB level are learners working toward in a LINC class? **E.g. What CLB level is being worked toward in LINC 4 class?**	As guided by the <u>National Placement and Progression Guidelines</u> (page 4), all learners including literacy learners are working toward the benchmark that is one level higher than their placement designation. In the example, learners in a LINC/CLB 4 class should have achieved CLB 3 (as evidenced by CLBPT scores or benchmarks assigned by a previous teacher) and be working toward the competencies associated with CLB 4. <u>Links</u> **National Placement and Progression Guidelines** **-learner placement to acquire competencies** https://www.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/National_Placement_Guidelines_2014-1.pdf
If a learner has completed some skill areas in a level but not all, do they have to stay in the class to complete the remaining skill areas? If remaining in the class to complete outstanding skill areas, what do they work toward in the areas that are already completed? Are 8 to 10 more artefacts needed in the skill areas already completed? **E.g. Completed CLB 4 in listening and speaking, CLB 4 not achieved in reading and writing. Do they have to stay in LINC 4 to complete reading and writing? If they stay in LINC 4, what do they**	Evaluating a portfolio and assigning a benchmark in each skill is the teacher's responsibility. Following any evaluation, the next placement for learning must be made for each learner and is the Admin's responsibility based on the teacher's evaluation, learner goals and program configuration. The <u>National Placement and Progression Guidelines (NPPG)</u> pages 4 and 5 provide guidance on placement levels when all or most benchmarks are the same, or when a learner has an irregular profile. Considering that the NPPG indicates a learner can be progressed into a course level if "most benchmarks are the same," a learner who has not completed some skill areas in a level is not compelled to stay in the class to complete the remaining skill area or areas. As further directed by the NPPG, whether the learner stays in the same level to complete in some skill areas or moves to a higher

do in listening and speaking? Are 8 to 10 more artefacts needed in listening and speaking?	**level should be the result of a recommendation by the teacher and a discussion between Admin and the learner about their goals and the best level for them to continue learning.** **If the learner remains in the same level to complete outstanding skill areas, they do not need to continue gathering artefacts in the skill areas already completed. Completed benchmarks in those skill areas, since they have been assigned by a teacher, should be carried over on the next progress report. Instead learners can work on material that addresses their specific needs for improvement or be given material to help them start preparing for the next level. They can also help other learners when tasks in those skill areas are being learned and practiced.** **Links** **National Placement and Progress Guidelines** **-learner placement or progression in Courses** https://www.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/National_Placement_Guidelines_2014-1.pdf
Are Lead Teachers responsible for reviewing portfolios to ensure teachers are implementing PBLA as required?	**Administrators are responsible for PBLA implementation in their programs. Lead Teachers are responsible for assisting classroom teachers as a peer/colleague. Therefore, Lead Teachers are not responsible for reviewing portfolios to ensure teachers are implementing PBLA as required.** **Links** **PBLA Practice Guidelines** **-Administrator, Lead Teacher and Classroom Teacher Roles** https://pblapg.language.ca/part-d-pbla-accountability-sharing-responsibility-for-success/administrator-lead-teacher-and-classroom-teacher-roles/