

PBLA Practice Guidelines FAQ

Portfolios – Content and Management

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>What themes are required to be covered for PBLA? (from 2020-2021 FAQ)</p>	<p>IRCC directs that language programs are based on the CLBs and incorporate PBLA. In PBLA: <i>“Planning for instruction and assessment is based on <u>learner identified needs and goals</u>. Learners participate in needs assessment to identify social situations and/or topics that they want to communicate in the community, for work or for school. This may be done at the beginning or during a reporting period or prior to each module.”</i></p> <p>In iCARE reporting for IRCC, programs identify the dominant focus of the course a learner is enrolled in: academic preparation, citizenship preparation, daily life/basic needs, occupation specific, or general/all of the above. There is no other formal direction from IRCC about any specific themes that must be covered in any level.</p> <p>Programs that also receive provincial funding should check with their provincial funder about any themes that may be required to cover.</p> <p><u>Links</u> -IRCC mandates for LINC Operational Bulletin 472-A (modified) – July 26, 2018 - Canada.ca -PBLA Practice Review Framework (Standard 1) https://pblapg.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PBLA-Practice-Review-Framework.pdf</p>
<p>What is the recommended pace of teaching and assessment for PBLA? i.e. How many hours of teaching should there be for each artefact? (from 2019-2020 FAQ)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

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	<p>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.</p> <p><u>Links</u> PBLA Practice Guidelines -reporting periods for Learner Progress Reports https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/reporting-periods/</p>
<p>Are a “task” and an “activity” the same? (from 2019-2020 FAQ)</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>How can a teacher be sure they are evaluating learners the same as another teacher in the same level? (from 2019-2020 FAQ)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>CCLB provides Professional Learning Sessions (PLS) on writing calibration: CLB Calibration and Action Oriented Feedback: Writing CLB 2-4, and CLB Calibration and Action Oriented Feedback: Writing CLB 4-6. Lead Teachers can help classroom teachers calibrate other skill areas using the PLS PBLA Portfolio Review Process (Revised 2019).</p> <p><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/</p>
<p>How many skill-using tasks can be included in the 8 to 10 artefacts needed for an evaluation? (from 2019-2020 FAQ)</p>	<p>The balance of sufficient artefacts in a skill area does not include a fixed number or percentage of skill-using versus assessment tasks.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For support on designing skill-using tasks that can be included in portfolios, Lead Teachers can deliver the Professional Learning Session Exploring Skill using Tasks (Revised 2019) to classroom teachers.</p>

	<p>Other relevant PLS: Building Portfolios (Revised 2019) and PBLA Portfolio Review Process (Revised 2019). An example of a specific type of program and needs of learners can be found in the PLS ESL Literacy Expectations.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><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/:</p>
<p>Can samples of learners' work completed outside class be included in the portfolio as an artefact (skill-using or assessment task)?</p> <p>e.g. a diary entry, a reading done at home, documents completed at work, etc. (from 2019-2020 FAQ)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For online and blended classes, providers must have protocols in place to ensure artefacts for inclusion in portfolios meet expectations for validity.</p> <p><u>Links</u> PBLA Practice Guidelines -documented observations https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/making-judgements-about-portfolio-contents/</p>
<p>Can a learner conference or a reflection be used as an assessment or skill-using task? (from 2020-2021 FAQ)</p>	<p>A learner conference is an opportunity for one-on-one discussion between a teacher and student about progress, areas for improvement, resources and strategies, and next steps: <i>The brief (10 to 15 minute) progress conference is an opportunity for the learner and teacher to review progress in learning English in relationship to the learner's specified needs and goals. It should be a culmination of ongoing dialogues that have occurred throughout the term, as well as an opportunity to consolidate information about language proficiency and to set new directions.</i></p> <p>A learner reflection is a "strategy employed by a student to monitor and reflect on the process of learning. It may include reflection on what was learned, what was easy or difficult, what helped learning, what hindered learning, or next steps."</p>

	<p>By contrast, the purpose of assessment or skill-using tasks is to measure language ability or progress and provide action-oriented feedback for improvement. A learner conference or reflection cannot therefore double as an assessment or skill-using task as the purposes of conferences and reflections do not align with the purpose of assessment or skill-using tasks.</p> <p><u>Links</u> PBLA Practice Guidelines -learner conferences https://pblapg.language.ca/part-c-pbla-reporting-learner-progress-reports-and-conferences/discussing-progress-learner-progress-conferences/ -learner reflections https://pblapg.language.ca/part-a-pbla-foundations/supplement-1-glossary/ -assessment https://pblapg.language.ca/part-b-pbla-portfolios-key-elements/feedback-and-assessment/</p>
<p>For the 3 levels of comprehension (literal, interpretive, applied) how many questions must be asked in each category for a listening or reading assessment? (from 2019-2020 FAQ)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>For more support on designing receptive tasks for PBLA, Lead Teachers can deliver the Professional Learning Session <u>Developing Receptive Tasks: A Refresher</u> to classroom teachers.</p>
<p>What is a documented observation versus anecdotal evidence? Are they both artefacts? (from 2020-2021 FAQ)</p>	<p>Documented observations are teacher <i>“observation of learner’s completion of CLB-aligned listening or speaking tasks (e.g. greetings, making requests, apologies) as part of everyday activities of the classroom.”</i> As such they are skill-using, ‘assessment for learning’ tasks with teacher comment-only observations. As they demonstrate growth over time like other skill-using tasks, documented observations count as artefacts for skill-area evaluation.</p> <p>Note that an observation record is a way for a teacher to keep track of documented observation evidence for evaluation in listening and speaking only. It is not mandatory to keep an observation record and PBLA does not provide an official observation record template.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence is teacher <i>“notes and anecdotal comments relating to skills and strategies a learner has developed during the course that demonstrate personal growth and learning such as the learner’s ability to self-correct or their new independence from an electronic translator.”</i> Anecdotal evidence is not counted among the artefacts needed for skill-area evaluation. Instead, along with other evidence from the About Me section of students’ portfolios, anecdotal evidence can be used to consider students’ progress towards personal goals.</p> <p><u>Links</u></p>

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