

Final Report

# Evaluation of the use of PBLA with Literacy Learners Research



Prepared for: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

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## Executive Summary

In summer, 2022, Setsu Kawahara and Vanessa Lent were contracted by CCLB to conduct research into the integration of Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) in LINC programs with designated literacy classes or with mainstream classes that included learners with literacy needs. The researchers solicited input from language practitioners working in these LINC classes, identified patterns from the feedback, and presented the findings and recommendations in the attached report.

The research was conducted in three parts: a widely distributed survey sent to administrators and Lead Teachers within LINC programs; small group meetings held through Zoom or Microsoft Teams with the researchers; and finally, through two Tutela Webinars timed to accommodate participants in different time zones across Canada.

The survey respondents and focus group participants were asked the following questions:

- What have been your successes integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners and to what do you attribute your successes?
- What have been your struggles integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?
- What supports or modifications would you like to see to help with the integration of PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?

The data incorporated feedback from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts in various modalities (in-person, online, blended, dedicated literacy classes, integrated classes). It showed that there are many commonalities within literacy programs that were using PBLA.

PBLA is applied within Literacy classes, including classes that offer a wide range of teaching and learning contexts for literacy learners, this includes the different modalities that LINC offers.

- While many programs are incorporating elements of PBLA into their classrooms, there is not a consistent approach to its application.
- Learners with literacy needs who are integrated into mainstream classes are often assessed following the same assessment procedures used with learners who do not have literacy needs.
- Many instructors working with classes with both literacy and mainstream learners report that they feel the needs of literacy learners are not being met.
- There is a lack of clarity around modifications within literacy classes and to what degree these modifications are acceptable.
- There is no consistency with the training offered to instructors to ready them for teaching such a vulnerable client group.

## Recommendations:

The following recommendations emerged from the research. They are grouped in three categories:

First: organizational and programming recommendations.

- Provide consistent and transparent program requirements across providers.
- Recognize that the acquisition of the basics of reading/writing/numeracy is in itself a learning task and is therefore a real-world task.

Second: procedural recommendations.

- Scale back the PBLA requirements within emergent literacy levels (Foundation and 1L).
- Introduce a well-paced timeline for how PBLA can be introduced between 2L and 4L.
- Provide paid training and PD time or have a dedicated digital navigator to support daily interaction with the technology used in an organization.
- Standardize funding for paid preparation time for literacy instructors.
- Standardize funding for paid training time for literacy instructors.
- Provide funding for literacy teaching assistants, volunteer training, and a literacy lead instructor when there are significant numbers of literacy learners in programs.
- Address the intersection between literacy learners, learners with disabilities, learners with mental illness, and learners who have experienced trauma.
- Develop and implement supports to address the intersections and ensure that LINC instructors have the capacity to focus on the language acquisition of their learners.
- Support community-based language training in an informal way.

Third: material recommendations.

- Develop modules specifically for literacy learners and use principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Design modules in a way that allows for flexibility for both dedicated literacy classes and mainstream classes with literacy learners embedded within them.
- Develop guidelines, support materials, and teaching materials for the “basics” of reading and writing skills (letter/sound discrimination, phonics, etc.).
- Establish a curriculum for the basics that includes numeracy and digital skills that run from Foundation to 2L.
- Adapt or modify the literacy language companion.
- Create robust online courses for teaching literacy learners (or adapt an existing organization’s in-house training program).
- Create a robust, accessible online platform for teaching literacy learners. Content should be accessible and progress along the digital literacy continuum in complexity while remaining level appropriate.
- Create more resources that are accessible online for programs that will continue to remain online or in blended formats.

- Ensure resources are uploaded and aligned to PBLA through Tutela for programs that deliver both online and blended formats.
- Create a checklist and “Can Do” Statements that address various outcomes in language skills, numeracy, digital skills, and learning strategies.

Other considerations:

As this process is extremely important, it is imperative to note that these changes will not happen overnight. However, there are some actions that can be taken in the short term, others will require more research and collaboration with the field to make such changes possible.

CCLB, within its own mandate, should continue to support and reach out to the community by increasing the development of literacy-focused modules, offering professional development around PBLA and literacy practice and continue to inform the community of the current resources available to them.

## I. Introduction

This report presents the research findings for the Evaluation of the use of Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) with Literacy Learners Research Project, conducted from May 2nd - July 10th, 2022. The purpose of this project was to collect feedback from educational professionals working with clients identified as “literacy” learners on the successes, best practices, challenges, and suggestions for additional supports that would enhance the implementation of PBLA. Literacy learners are a unique form of language learner:

Adult ESL Literacy learners work toward the same language learning outcomes as literate ESL learners (as outlined in Canadian Language Benchmarks), but their learning does not progress as quickly because they lack transferable literacy concepts, knowledge and strategies from their first language; they are working on both language and literacy at the same time. Because of this, ESL Literacy learners need considerable support, instruction, and guided practice in acquiring and applying literacy skills and strategies. ([Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners \[ALL\], 2016](#))

It is of utmost importance that all decision-makers fully understand the distinct nature of working with literacy learners and the particular complexities of programming. In addition, the vulnerability of this group of newcomers to Canada cannot be overemphasized.

When Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) introduced Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) as a transition from standardized testing to a more holistic assessment of skills through a collaborative approach between instructors and learners, the organizations implementing PBLA with literacy learners experienced a wide breadth of successes and challenges, which have been ongoing. The goal of this research project was to collect, synthesize, and present data from language practitioners from across Canada on the topic of implementation of PBLA in LINC classes with literacy learners and provide recommendations around the use of PBLA with literacy learners. Because the teaching conditions vary widely from province-to-province, and from rural to small centres to urban centres, the data and analyses presented herein reflect this diversity.

This report will first outline the project objectives and methodology, and then present a synthesis of the findings from three key data-collection methods. The synthesis of these findings will be used to provide a list of recommendations. The report ends with a series of appendices that provide a more detailed presentation of the data collected throughout the research project as well as recommendations and resources for implementing PBLA in classrooms with literacy learners.

## II. Project Objectives

The objectives of the Evaluation of the use of PBLA with Literacy Learners Research Project were:

- To solicit feedback from a broad selection of language practitioners about the integration of PBLA in designated literacy classes or mainstream classes that include learners with literacy needs.
- To synthesize and analyze feedback to identify patterns and trends in designated literacy classes or mainstream classes that include learners with literacy needs.
- To present findings and recommendations based on the analysis of feedback from language practitioners working with literacy learners within LINC classes that use PBLA.

## III. Methodology

There were three key methods for collecting feedback for this research initiative. The first was a broadly distributed survey consisting of a set of questions about the integration of PBLA into classes with literacy learners. These survey questions provided opportunities for participants to give brief answers while also offering a choice to give more detailed feedback if they liked. The major reason for this flexibility was to encourage participation from teachers and administrators who wanted to participate but had minimal time to commit, as well as to provide ample opportunity for respondents who wanted to give more detailed feedback. This survey ran from May 13th to June 19th, 2022, and 224 participants submitted responses. There were 8 additional survey responses submitted after the survey end-date and these were taken into account in this section as well. An analysis of these responses is found in section IV of this report and a more detailed breakdown of the survey results is presented in [Appendix A](#).

The second method for collecting feedback consisted of small group meetings with the researchers via online meeting technologies such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. There were ten meetings and approximately 54 participants in total. Three additional conversations were held after the project was officially closed. These meetings provided the researchers an opportunity to introduce their research initiative and trending responses to date, allow participants the opportunity to ask questions about the project, and then delve into feedback around three core questions:

- 1) What have been your successes integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners and to what do you attribute your successes?
- 2) What have been your struggles integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?
- 3) What supports or modifications would you like to see to help with the integration of PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?

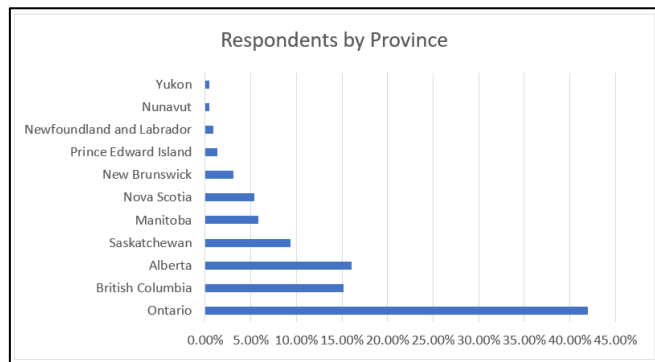
An analysis of these responses is found in section V of this report and a more detailed breakdown of the survey results is presented in [Appendix B](#).

The third and final method for collecting feedback was through two webinars hosted on Tutela. Both webinars took place on Saturday June 4th. Each online webinar was designed to meet ideal times for participants across the country. Each online webinar was an hour long and 49 instructors and administrators participated in total. The webinars provided the researchers an opportunity to introduce their research initiative and trending responses to date, allow participants the opportunity to ask questions about the project, and then delve into feedback around the same three core questions outlined above for the second method. An analysis of these responses is found in section VI of this report and a more detailed breakdown of the survey results is presented in [Appendix C](#).

Overall, these three methods were chosen because each presents different strengths: the survey results provided a breadth of responses and captured the widest possible range of data in the time provided, while the smaller meetings provided respondents and researchers more time to engage in dialogue. The researchers, for example, had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and, due to this, the responses were more in-depth and detailed. The webinars fell in the middle of the first two methods, with many participants offering feedback and allowing for some time for dialogue between participants and researchers.

## IV. Online Survey

### Profile of respondents



Of the survey respondents, 94 (40.52%) came from Ontario. British Columbia and Alberta saw the second highest number of respondents with 42 (18.10%) and 36 (15.52%) respectively. Saskatchewan had 21 respondents (9.05%) and Manitoba had 13 (5.60%). The Atlantic provinces saw Nova Scotia with 12 respondents (5.17%), New Brunswick with 7 (3.02%), Prince Edward Island with 3 (1.29%), and Newfoundland and Labrador with 2 (0.86%). The Yukon and Nunavut had one respondent each (0.43%) and there were no respondents from the Northwest Territories. Quebec offers its own settlement language programs and does not participate in LINC. Many respondents, 172 (74.14%), identified themselves as working within an urban centre while the rest identified themselves as working in rural areas or smaller urban centres.

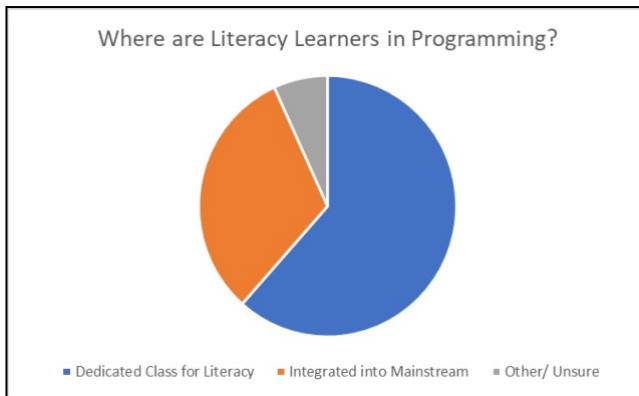
Question 3 of the survey asked respondents whether there are literacy learners in their programs. Of the survey respondents, 91.07% identified themselves as having literacy learners within their classes or programs. The details shared in this survey question reveal the overwhelming diversity



of literacy instruction delivery across the country. These are highlighted throughout the report.

### Profile of teaching and learning conditions for classes with literacy learners

Question 4 of the survey asked respondents to further elaborate on the question of whether they had dedicated literacy classes or literacy learners integrated into mainstream classes. 136 (58.62%) respondents identified dedicated literacy classes, 81 (34.91%) respondents identified that their literacy learners are integrated into mainstream classes, and 15 (6.47%) identified as other/unsure.



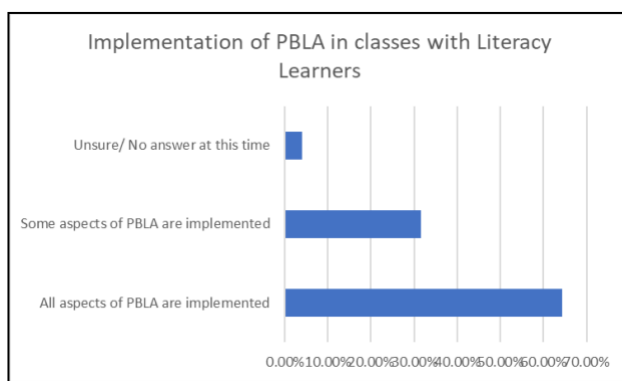
The feedback from this question highlights the wide variety of teaching and learning contexts within LINC programming. Some examples of different delivery modes for literacy learners include:

- In-person, online, or blended single-level mainstream classes between CLB 1-4 with literacy students embedded within them
- In-person, online, or blended multi-level mainstream classes between CLB 1-4 with literacy students embedded within them
- In-person, online, or blended dedicated single-level literacy classes
- In-person, online, or blended dedicated multi-level literacy classes
- Mainstream classes with literacy students embedded within them that have literacy support teachers
- Conversation circles with both mainstream and literacy learners
- Conversation circles with only literacy learners
- One-on-one instruction through outreach programs

Some respondents noted that the specific instruction literacy learners may receive is sometimes dependent on the context. For example, if there is a significant increase in the amount of literacy learners at any one time, there are sometimes dedicated classes opened, and then, if these numbers decline, dedicated literacy classes may close, and remaining literacy learners are placed within a mainstream class. This is significant because of how often respondents expressed frustration and worry about how the needs of their literacy learners were not being met within mainstream classrooms. Another common response identified the classes the learners attend may not be appropriate due to a misplacement of the learner at the time of assessment. Other times,

“teachers are not informed and ‘move’ the [literacy] student too quickly because they feel they have been in a particular level ‘long enough.’” Assessment Centres differ in their recognition of literacy learners, if indeed they do literacy assessments. Also notable from the comments is the disparity in class sizes, with classes ranging from 1 to 60 learners, indicating class sizes well over IRCC guidelines. There is also a disparity in class time per week for learners, anywhere from 6 hours per week in a part-time program to 25 hours per week in a full-time program. The breadth and scope of literacy instruction contexts, as well as the significant move to instruction within digital environments in the last two-and-a-half years, are taken into consideration within the Findings and Recommendations sections of this report.

### Use and effectiveness of PBLA in literacy classes



Question 5 of the survey asked respondents whether their programs implement PBLA with their literacy learners.

143 (64.41%) responded that all aspects of PBLA are implemented and 70 (31.53%) indicated that some aspects of PBLA are implemented. While no respondents indicated that they do not implement PBLA with their literacy learners, 9 (4.05%) answered that they are not sure or have no answer at this time.

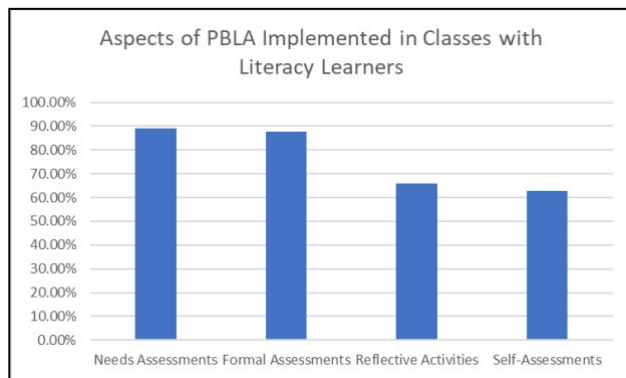
The comments included for this question offer a rich amount of detail about the effectiveness of PBLA within literacy classes. Some notable trends include:

- PBLA is too abstract for literacy learners
- Literacy learners don't have the language or learning experience to make the necessary
  - connections
- PBLA is too challenging to deliver in multilevel classrooms
- The COVID-19 pandemic made delivering assessments challenging
- PBLA is effective with literacy learners only with heavy support from the instructors
- PBLA assessments are not effective, appropriate, or meaningful for literacy learners
- PBLA is implemented but only with major modifications in delivery, pace, etc.
- Many literacy learners also have physical and/or learning disabilities that make PBLA delivery especially challenging

- Formal assessments are not as useful for instructors as informal assessments
- PBLA components take up too much class time and detract from other learning

It is also notable that participants are aware and agree to varying degrees with research and findings around the challenges and/or suitability of the implementation of PBLA with literacy learners, including the IRCC’s Evaluation of Language Training Services Report (2021).

Question 6 of the survey asks respondents to elaborate on which elements of PBLA are integrated into their classroom practice.



Needs assessments are delivered by 193 (88.94%) of respondents, formal assessments are delivered by 190 (87.56%) of respondents, reflective activities are delivered by 143 (65.90%) of respondents, and self-assessments are delivered by 136 (62.67%) of respondents.

**The comments included for question 6 indicate the following trends:**

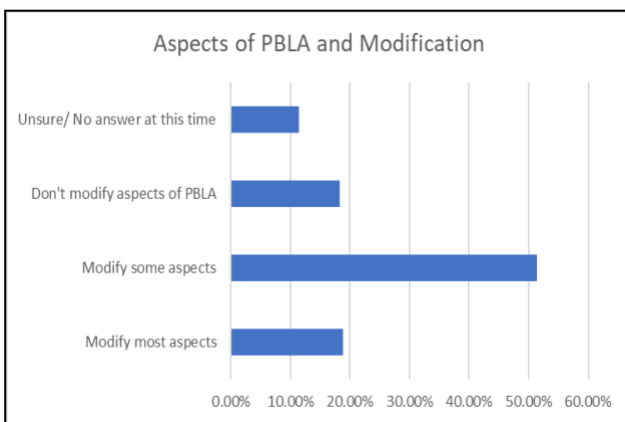
- Formal assessments create fear and hinder progress while informal assessments are much more useful
- Reflective activities have transitioned to more general, less formal style
- Self-assessments are not effective at the emergent literacy levels – learners lack the language and metacognitive knowledge about learning to make them meaningful
- Reflective and self-assessments are challenging at Foundation and 1L levels
- These PBLA elements are possible with support from TAs or volunteers
- PBLA elements should not be introduced until 2L
- Learners struggle to engage in these tasks independently
- Instead of needs assessments, there should be a standardized curriculum for Foundation and 1L
- Skill-using activities instead of formal assessments are more appropriate for literacy
- The recommended assessment schedule does not work for literacy learners as they need much longer to be successful at a task
- The PBLA elements are too time consuming
- Formal assessments are stressful for both the learners and the instructors

These trends suggest that, while many programs are incorporating elements of PBLA into their

classrooms, there is no consistent way that it is being delivered across programs. While some instructors/programs are making modifications to meet the PBLA requirements (such as offering self-assessments orally), others are attempting to implement the elements in the same way and at the same pace as mainstream programs. Almost half of the programs represented report that their literacy learners are placed in mainstream classes and, often, the literacy learners follow the same assessment procedures as the mainstream learners. Many of the instructors working with classes with both literacy and mainstream learners report that they feel the needs of literacy learners are not being met. As one respondent stated:

Having literacy learners in my class creates tension. It is not good for them, other students and the teacher. Some students like to help but some students see the literacy learners as interrupting the class and taking my time away from them to support their learning. True level one students get frustrated because they can't do anything meaningful to help their learning with the students. The student can't read the dialogues, questions etc. First language becomes an issue as they need help in first language. When they are not successful at an assessment or unable to do it lowers their confidence. Also, the other students view them, wrongly, as not intelligent. Really, it's just they have not had the opportunity to learn for different reasons.

Question 10 of the survey asked whether individual instructors or the program more generally make any modifications to PBLA when delivering it to literacy learners.



Of the respondents, 41 (18.81%) indicated they modify most aspects of PBLA, 112 (51.38%) modify some aspects of PBLA, 40 (18.35%) make no modifications to PBLA, and 25 (11.47%) are not sure or have no answer at this time.

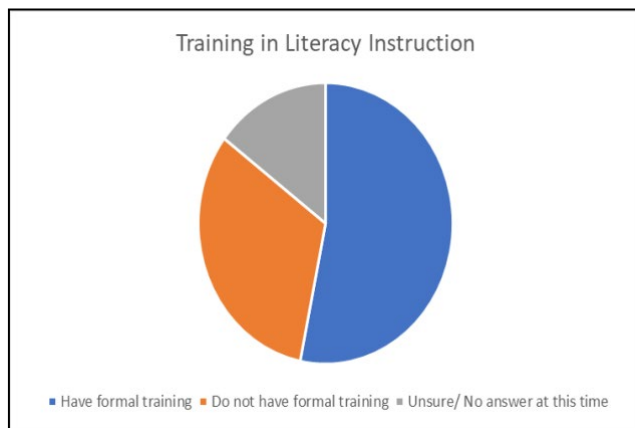
The comments for this question indicate that most instructors need to modify PBLA components in order to make them useful and meaningful to literacy learners. Respondents' comments elaborate on this need:

- The reflection and inventory sheets are used for higher levels only
- The pace is slowed down

- Emergent literacy learners do not use the full language companion
- We must modify the number of assessments – one per week is not realistic for literacy
- Modified ratio of skill-using activities to formal assessments
- Self-assessment is more useful orally to help them reflect and set goals
- Focus on oral skills and less reading and writing assessments
- The type of reading/writing skills the learners work on cannot be real-world tasks – the learners need the basics first
- Some organizations stress full compliance but in practice this is challenging/not effective
- There has been no communication that PBLA modifications are allowed

The overall trend of discrepancy across programs is reflected by the responses to question 10. This disparity shown by all three of the questions in this section will be taken into account within the Findings and Recommendations sections of this report.

### PBLA and teacher training

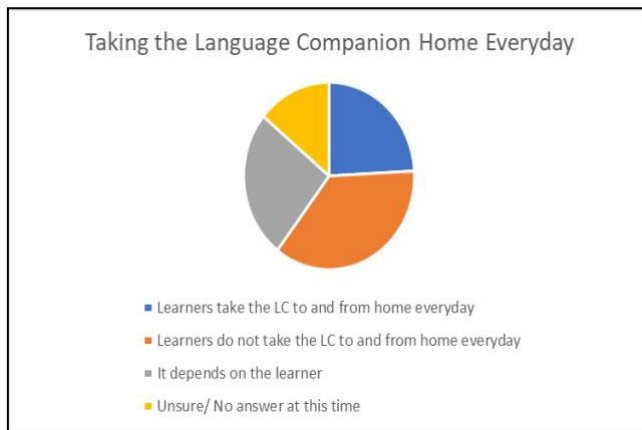
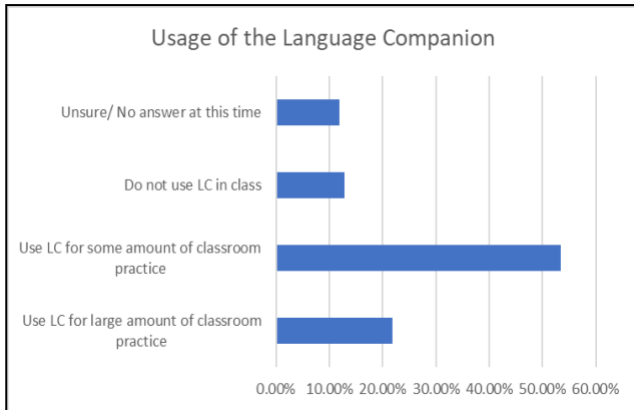


Question 7 of the survey asked respondents if they have any formal training in literacy instruction. Of the respondents, 124 (53.45%) indicated they do have formal training, 70 (30.17%) indicated they do not, and 32 (13.79%) indicated they are not sure or have no answer at this time. This last percentage is elaborated on in the comments, with respondents unsure about what qualifies as formal training.

Overall, the responses to this question indicate that literacy training is a huge gap for both instructors and administrators. There was a wide variety of responses about what constituted “formal training.” There are a handful of resources available including the TELLS course offered by ISANS, Tutela Webinars, conference presentations, the CCLB’s *ESL for ALL* courses and other PD workshops, and some in-house literacy training. “Formal” training encompassed any one, or several, of these options. One respondent noted that they took a two-year intensive literacy instruction program with elementary school teachers and this “finally gave [them] the theory and practical methodology that [they] had been looking for.” Respondents also indicated the presence of informal modes of training such as class observations, collaboration and mentorship

with colleagues, and hands-on experience in the classroom. Many respondents indicated they would appreciate and benefit from more literacy-specific training.

### The literacy language companion



Of the respondents, 50 (24.15%) indicated that their learners do take the language companion to-and-from class every day, 75 (36.23%) do not take to-and-from class every day, 53 (25.60%) indicated that it depends on the learner, and 29 (14.01%) indicated that they are not sure or have no answer.

The feedback collected for these two questions reflected diverse opinions about the Language Companion.

#### Language Companion Advantages:

- The language companion is helpful for organization
- The language companion is useful, but it could be much more so
- The language companions stay at school to avoid losing them
- Some organizations use a digital version in avenue.ca
- Some organizations encourage learners to bring it back and forth and spend one hour a week on language companion organization / management

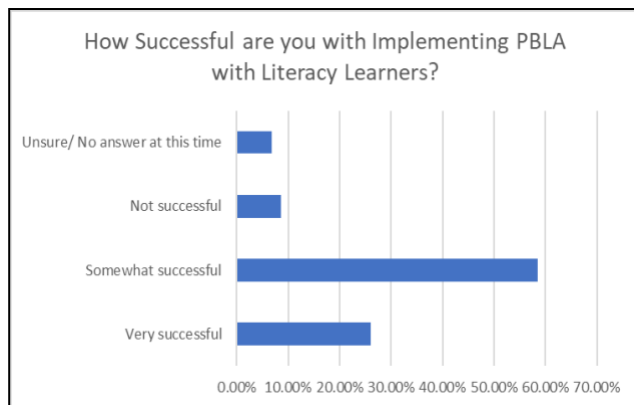
- Some organizations have switched to e-portfolios
- Some organizations encourage learners to bring it back and forth and spend one hour a week on language companion organization/management
- Some organizations have switched to e-portfolios

**Language Companion Disadvantages:**

- While the language companion was used before COVID, many programs have not taken it up again
- Because some classes are still online, students who have joined recently still do not have a language companion
- The language companion is a difficult concept for literacy learners to grasp
- Keeping the language companions organized is challenging and time-consuming
- The language companion is too heavy and complicated for literacy learners
- Because many students commute, and may have errands (shopping) or work before or after school, the language companion is too cumbersome for them to transport
- Blended literacy/mainstream classes mean some learners have different language companions from one another in a class
- Language companion use requires a lot of teacher interpretation
- Instructors should have access to the images used within the companion to make resources to accompany it
- Some organizations print them in house, and it is costly for the program
- Emergent literacy levels would benefit from a more simplified/colour-coded version
- The language companion is digital now and the physical versions are obsolete.

These trends are taken into account within the Findings and Recommendations sections of this report.

**PBLA and literacy successes**



The survey had three questions that homed in on successes implementing PBLA in classes with literacy learners. Question 11 asks respondents how successful they have been implementing PBLA.

Of respondents, 57 (26.03%) reported feeling very successful, 128 (58.45%) reported feeling somewhat successful, 19 (8.68%) reported not feeling successful, and 15 (6.85%) were not sure or did not have an answer.

Respondents elaborated their responses in the comments section. Some of the significant comments and trends are:

#### **Successful Practices:**

- Using practical learning skills as assessments has helped due to learning being, in itself, a real-world task
- Understanding how PBLA fits within the bigger picture of learning has been helpful
- Successes are more common in the higher literacy levels than the emergent ones
- Success is due to being able to modify for literacy learners
- PBLA can work for all levels of literacy, except Foundation
- Changing the expectations of what it means to “implement” PBLA has made a positive difference
- The shift to digital learning has brought “the real world right into our classrooms. Many everyday digital tasks can now be counted as real-world tasks”

#### **Challenges:**

- It remains time-consuming
- Completing 26 assessments in a 14-week term is unrealistic for literacy learners
- It is challenging when there are literacy learners embedded in mainstream classes, especially if the literacy learner has not been properly identified with a literacy designation: “The instructor then has to do deduce and infer a lot more and place the L,” “The assessment centre does not do the literacy assessment. Sometimes they randomly assign a literacy designation in ONLY reading and writing. Most literacy students have not been designated and it is up to the teacher to determine if they have literacy needs.”
- The time necessary to implement PBLA “could be better spent on language acquisition”
- PBLA does not work for Foundation
- The number of artefacts slows down learner progress
- The system is not set up for literacy learners with physical or learning disabilities
- “Success in implementing PBLA does not equate to success in learning the language”
- There is too much pressure from administration to complete the number of assessments required from the funders
- PBLA assessments create the conditions to “teach to the test”
- Success is due to unpaid overtime labour on the part of the instructor

Again, there is a significant amount of disparity in the success of PBLA implementation across programs. This disparity seems directly tied to instructor and student buy-in to the program due to knowledge about the “bigger picture” of PBLA as well as the ability to modify PBLA for learners. For example, while some instructors report that PBLA assessments “made my students [fuss] over passing the test and not the actual learning,” others report that the assessment process



“allows students to see which areas they need to work on.”

Question 12 asks respondents to further elaborate on the successes they have achieved in the implementation of PBLA. Some of the noteworthy responses include:

**Program structure:**

- Task-based assessments give learners a concrete goal
- Small class sizes
- Teaching and classroom supports such as assistants and volunteers
- Trained instructors
- Dedicated literacy lead teacher

**Classroom practices:**

- Use of pictures, visuals, and icons throughout teaching practice
- Graphs to show progression motivate the learners
- Using the education theme to frame and practice certain PBLA elements
- Incorporating technology in a way that lets the learners practice their English outside of class
- Easily available, accessible classroom materials geared towards literacy learners
- PBLA multi-level modules
- Incorporating phonics and other reading skills practice into the classroom
- Making self-reflections really concrete
- Hands-on, slow-paced, visually explicit approach
- Backwards planning
- Framing the language companion as a resource

Question 13 then asked respondents to elaborate on what specific supports have helped them achieve success implementing PBLA in their classes with literacy learners. Notable responses and trends include:

**Programming:**

- Modifying PBLA to meet the learners’ needs
- Volunteers and extra learning supports in the classroom
- Strong peer support within the organization
- Knowledgeable management and administration about literacy and PBLA realities

**Instructor training:**

- Past teaching experience
- Professional learning sessions, webinars, training, and PD
- Paid prep and collaboration time

**Resources:**

- Access to technology to make classroom materials

- Having the time/resources to make resources to meet the specific class needs
- Integrating additional reading and writing tasks not tied to PBLA outcomes/requirements
- Ready-made assessment materials
- Focusing on the basics of reading and writing skills
- Digital tools such as SCORMs, H5Ps, and ReadAloud, WhatsApp, etc.
- ESL for ALL and ESL for ALL Support Kit
- Tutela, Literacy Centre of Expertise (TIES), Real World Task bank, Avenue.ca, etc.

## PBLA and literacy challenges

Question 14 of the survey asked respondents to identify the challenges they have faced implementing PBLA in classrooms with literacy learners. Of the respondents, 171 (77.38%) indicated they have experienced challenges. Notable comments and trends include:

### Programming:

- PBLA is too abstract for learners
- Inconsistencies in classroom conditions make PBLA difficult for literacy
- Learners (attendance, volunteer support, etc.)
- PBLA requirements from funders, including number of artefacts, are unrealistic for literacy learners
- Multi-level classes and classes with both literacy and mainstream learners make the management of PBLA requirements too much for instructors “In the program: Having only integrated classes- teachers are pressured by non-literacy learners to go faster and do more assessments.”
- The assessments put unnecessary pressure on the learners, causing anxiety
- Some competencies are very difficult to translate to real-world tasks for emergent literacy levels
- Incorporating PBLA into classes with literacy learners is time-consuming and does not leave time to teach the basics of reading and writing
- Lack of support and understanding of literacy needs from management
- Too much focus on counting artefacts as opposed to actually building skills
- Unrealistic timelines for literacy learner progression
- PBLA does not leave enough time to develop the numeracy and digital skills that literacy learners need for settlement purposes

### Literacy learners:

- Literacy learners come with several barriers in addition to their lack of literacy, including “Trauma, loss of memory, lack of digital skills, mental health issues, stress,” etc.
- Literacy learners lack the language necessary to communicate with the instructor about metacognitive learning strategies

### Resources:

- The PBLA language companion uses language and fonts that are inappropriate for literacy

learners

- It is challenging to create assessments that are accessible and fair for literacy learners because they need so much support (i.e., listening assessments still rely on visuals, etc.)
- Lack of literacy- and level-appropriate resources
- Lack of real-world task resources for the emergent literacy levels (Foundation and 1L)
- Instructors need to create materials responsive to their learners which is time-consuming
- Lack of literacy specific “Can Do” Statements

## PBLA and literacy supports and/or modifications

Question 15 of the survey asked respondents to identify supports that would help them implement PBLA in classes with literacy learners. Some of the notable comments and trends raised in this question include:

### Programming:

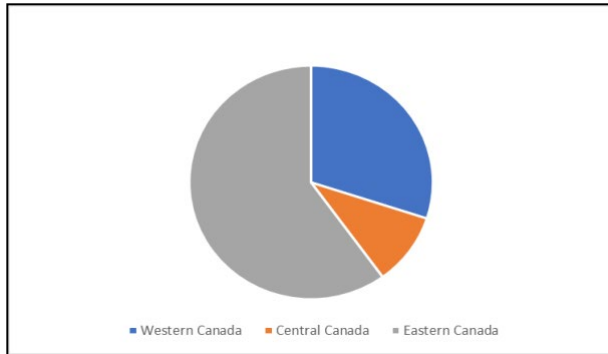
- Limit the implementation of PBLA in emergent literacy levels (Foundation and 1L)
- Funding for dedicated teaching assistants and volunteer training
- Consistent permission to focus on basic fundamentals before implementing PBLA
- Funding for specialized literacy training for all levels (including management)
- Smaller class sizes
- Dedicated literacy classes
- Literacy PBLA trained lead
- More paid time for classroom preparation
- Opportunities to network and collaborate with other literacy instructors across Canada

### Resources:

- Creation of an appropriate literacy language companion
- More teaching and assessment materials designed specifically for literacy learners
- Simple real-world tasks that relate to the themes
- More literacy modules
- Access to literacy-appropriate pictures and videos
- Exemplars of literacy-level assessments to draw ideas
- “A quick guide to PBLA implementation in the literacy classroom (like a checklist) with examples of how various PBLA elements might look”
- Pragmatic teaching resources
- Access to SmartBoards, realia, and colour resources
- Diagnosis tool for learning disabilities
- Simplified and pragmatic resources (such as a guide and checklists) for the Continuum in *ESL for ALL*
- Clear, consistent guidelines for implementing PBLA with literacy learners
- An interactive digital literacy language companion
- Guidance and resources for reading and writing skills (letter names, letter sounds, etc.)

## V. Small Group Consultations

### Profile of respondents



It should be noted that all participants in the small group sessions completed the online survey through Survey Monkey.

Within the 10 groups, comprising 49 participants, more than half came from the Atlantic region (6 of the 10 groups) with two groups participating under their umbrella organization of ARAISA. These groups had instructors and administrators from all four Atlantic provinces and the other groups were from Nova Scotia. One group participated from Ontario, two groups from Alberta, and another was a gathering of instructors and administrators from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. There were no small group participants from Quebec, or the Northern Territories. Additional outreach was done to BC and responses were gathered after the closing of the research activity. In addition to an additional 8 survey responses, 3 one-on-one conversations were had. Responses were incorporated into the feedback. Responses remained consistent with other findings across the country.

All the participants in the small group discussions worked in programming in major urban centres except for a very small percentage (10%) who considered themselves working in rural or smaller centres.

Working under the assumption that all participants had completed the survey, discussions were focused on expanding and elaborating on the three major questions under investigation:

- 1) What have been your successes integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners and to what do you attribute your successes?
- 2) What have been your struggles integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?
- 3) What supports or modifications would you like to see to help with the integration of PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?

The discussions started with an overview of the results of the survey to date so time could be spent on elaboration and robust discussion as opposed to sharing information already gathered and recognized.

## PBLA and literacy successes

Similar to the online survey results, clear trends emerged from the discussions. [Appendix B](#) contains a detailed summary of the data.

**A summary of the experienced successes is as follows:**

### **Organizational/Programming:**

- Some organizations view PBLA as a process as opposed to a product. That is, they work to avoid the sense that PBLA is an “assessment mill.” Instead, PBLA elements are beneficial when incorporated into classroom practices
- Small class sizes
- Dedicated literacy classes
- Literacy Lead PBLA teacher
- The language companion, when used properly, can show learners their progress and learners can take pride in that. It serves as a pathway to document use
- Literacy-specific training including in-house, TELLS (ISANS), CCLB self-directed, TIES
- A supportive administration
- Instructors and staff who show qualities of patience, empathy, and inter-cultural awareness

### **Modifications:**

- Needs assessments are often pictorial and increase learner buy-in. This is then reflected in increased attendance
- Organization supports modification of PBLA elements and are not prescriptive in its use
- Modification of materials such as the language companion, skills icons, etc.

### **Resources:**

- Available resources such as *ESL for ALL* and CCLB multi-level modules

## PBLA and literacy challenges

Discussions around challenges experienced were also as reflective of those reported in the online survey. Some notable comments include:

### **Organizational/Programming:**

- Lack of programming consistency across providers and provinces
- Lack of understanding and support at the administrative levels and at the funding level. There is an emphasis from administration on meeting the needs of funders as opposed to the needs of literacy learners
- Time constraints with respect to material creation and preparation
- Literacy learners not correctly identified at placement

- Lack of access to technology and support for learning digital skills for both students and instructors
- Instructors feeling like they are failing both their learners and their management due to lack of supports. This, in turn, leads to instructor burn-out and high turnover
- Lack of training opportunities in general and paid training opportunities more specifically
- Some aspects of PBLA are challenging for the emergent levels of literacy (particularly Foundation and 1L)

### **PBLA and literacy supports and/or modifications**

Similarly, discussions about the supports that would benefit programs implementing PBLA with literacy learners echoed the sentiments in the online survey. Some notable comments include:

#### **Organizational/Programming:**

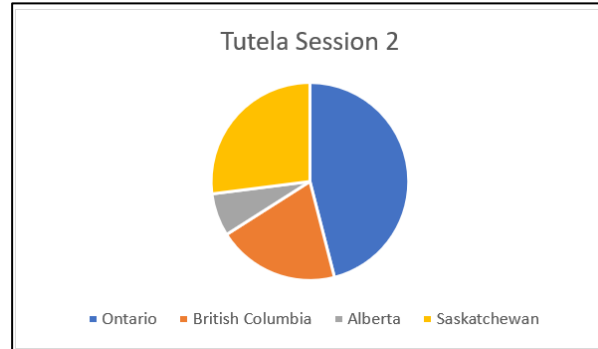
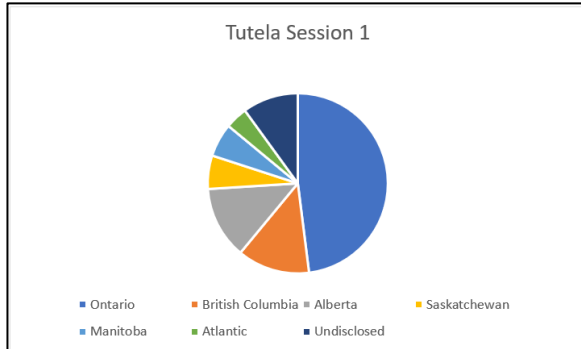
- Smaller class sizes
- Paid time for instructors to prepare classroom materials
- Dedicated literacy classes/dedicated class time for literacy learners to address their literacy gaps
- Training for instructors: formal training in TESL programs, professional development opportunities, webinars demonstrating successful literacy class instruction, and accessible classroom resource exemplars and samples
- More opportunities to share and collaborate with fellow literacy instructors across the country
- Consistency across programming
- Trained volunteers
- Funding for teaching assistants
- Literacy experts and champions at higher levels within administration, CCLB, and funders
- Literacy training for administrators and management
- Training and support for working with literacy learners who have disabilities and accessibility challenges
- A third funding stream that offers a more informal language training model for literacy learners that is still run by trained literacy instructors
- A more gradual introduction of PBLA in literacy classes over time that allows for the incorporation of the “basics” of learning such as phonics, decoding, and strategy instruction

#### **Resources:**

- Resources such as assessment materials and complete modules designed for literacy learners
- Checklists for literacy milestones

## VI. Tutela Webinars

### Profile of respondents

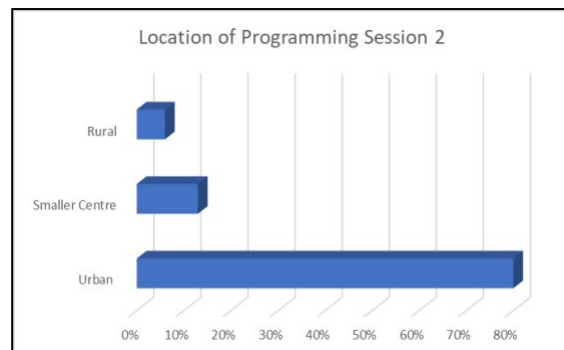
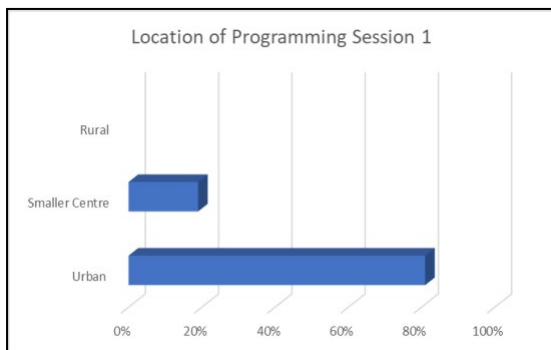


It should be noted that all participants in the two Tutela sessions completed the online survey through Survey Monkey.

The Tutela sessions consisted of two meetings on a Saturday, strategically timed so as to be accessible to all regions across the country. The first group timed for convenience for those in the eastern zones, comprised 32 participants. Approximately half of the participants came from Ontario (48%), 13% from both British Columbia and Alberta, 6% from both Saskatchewan and Manitoba, 4% from the Atlantic provinces and 10% (approximately 4 participants) who did not self-identify.

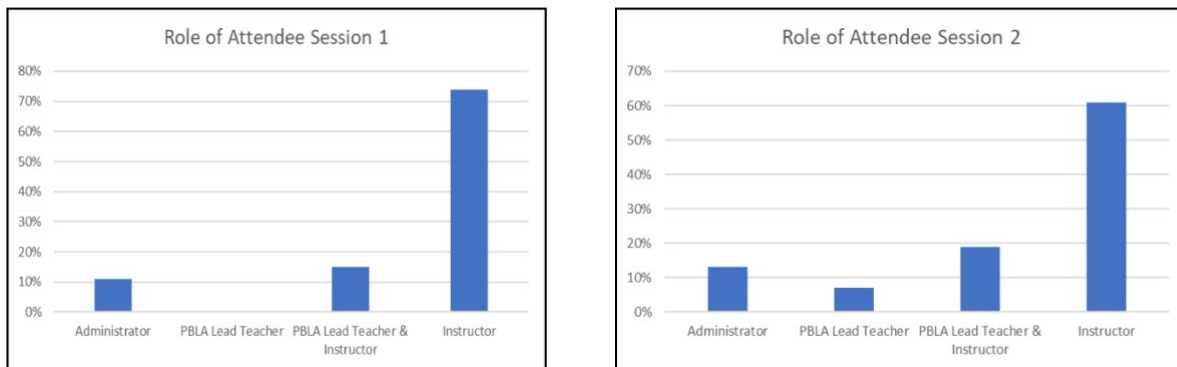
The second session, timed for convenience to those in the western zones, comprised 17 participants. Again, participants from Ontario made up almost half of the group (46%), with an additional 27% from Saskatchewan, 20% from British Columbia, and 7% from Alberta.

81% of the participants in the first session worked in programming in major urban centres and 19% who considered themselves working in smaller centres. 80% of participants in the second session identified as working in urban centres, 13% from smaller centres, and 3% from rural programs.



In group 1, 89% of participants were either instructors (74%) or both PBLA Leads and instructors (15%). The other 11% were administrators. In the second group, instructors made up the majority

(61%), PBLA leads who also work as instructors comprised 19%, those who work only as PBLA leads were 7%, and administrators were 13% of participants.



Working under the assumption that all participants had completed the survey, discussions were focused on expanding and elaborating on the three major questions under investigation:

- 1) What have been your successes integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners and to what do you attribute your successes, if known?
- 2) What have been your struggles integrating PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners? and 3) What supports or modifications would you like to see to help with the integration of PBLA into classrooms with literacy learners?

The discussions started with an overview of the results of the survey to date so time could be spent on elaboration and robust discussion as opposed to sharing information already gathered and recognized.

### PBLA and literacy successes

Feedback was consistent with what had been gathered prior to the Tutela sessions and what was gathered subsequent to the session. Clear trends were apparent in these discussions. [Appendix C](#) contains a detailed summary of the data. Some notable comments include:

#### Organizational/Programming:

- Incorporating explicit learning strategy instruction into classroom practice
- Allowing lots of time for completion of tasks
- Dedicated literacy classes with consistent instructors
- A literacy lead PBLA teacher
- Paid time to prepare classroom materials
- Collaboration with and mentorship from other literacy instructors within the organization
- Literacy training (in-house, ISANS' TELLS course, CCLB self-directed resources, TIES)
- Supportive administration/PBLA leads that understand the needs of literacy learners
- Teaching Assistants
- Trained and experienced classroom volunteers



- An itinerant instructor who gives dedicated one-on-one support to literacy learners
- Dedicated positions to offer digital tech support to literacy instructors and learners
- Additional level of literacy learner screening by a trained literacy instructor when new learners are on-boarded

#### **Classroom Practices:**

- Incorporating explicit learning strategy instruction into classroom practice
- Allowing lots of time for completion of tasks
- Dedicated time for literacy learners to address literacy skills
- Adoption of technology within literacy instruction

#### **Resources:**

- Literacy-friendly needs assessments, often pictorial-based
- Literacy-appropriate books/readers made in-house or accessed through Tutela
- Using literacy-friendly images throughout many elements of PBLA
- Available resources: ESL for ALL, CCLB multi-level modules, TIES modules, in-house materials and templates

### **PBLA and literacy challenges**

Discussions around challenges experienced were also reflective of other feedback gathered throughout the research project. Some notable comments include:

#### **Organizational/Programming:**

- Unrealistic expectations about how many assessments can be delivered to literacy learners within a set period of time
- No guidelines on how to teach reading and writing skills within the parameters of PBLA
- Literacy learners embedded within mainstream classes tax the instructor's capacity. This is compounded in multi-level classes
- PBLA is hard to implement within part-time programming
- Too much time spent on PBLA and not enough on fundamental literacy skill acquisition
- The difficulty of balancing PBLA elements within classes with continuous enrollment
- Uncertainty around what kinds of skill-building and skill-using activities can "count" as real-world tasks, particularly within Foundation and 1L
- Time constraints with respect to material creation leading to instructors doing this work during unpaid hours
- Instructor burn-out and high turnover within literacy. This, in turn, leads to brand-new instructors with the least amount of training and experience left teaching the most demanding and vulnerable learners: "Experienced teachers do not want to teach literacy classes so often there are newer teachers in literacy classes who need extra support and training. We have had literacy teachers who ignore literacy needs (they get excited if they do not adjust their teaching practices)."

- Lack of access to targeted training in literacy instruction

#### **Literacy learners:**

- Literacy learners who experience additional barriers to learning including health and disability barriers
- Literacy learners “falling through the cracks”
- Many aspects of PBLA end up being challenging for the emergent levels of literacy

#### **Classroom practices:**

- Lack of access to technology and support for learning digital skills for both learners and instructors who may have low digital literacy

#### **Resources:**

- The language companion is not literacy friendly and too much valuable class time is spent managing the portfolio
- Lack of literacy-appropriate resources, particularly for levels Foundation to 2L
- Lack of literacy-appropriate numeracy resources
- Lack of comprehensive guiding document for how to teach literacy learners

### **PBLA and literacy supports and/or modifications**

Similarly, discussions about the supports that would benefit programs implementing PBLA with literacy learners echoed the sentiments from other feedback-gathering methods. Some notable comments include:

#### **Organizational/Programming:**

- Smaller class sizes supported by all levels of funding
- Funded position of a literacy lead instructor
- Clear, consistent guidelines that outline how and when to make PBLA modifications for literacy learners within different teaching and learning contexts
- Professional training for the instruction of literacy learners
- Paid material preparation time for instructors
- Dedicated literacy classes and dedicated time for literacy learners to address literacy gaps
- Guidance about how to explicitly teach learning strategies to literacy learners
- More open, collaborative sharing of resources and ideas across the country
- A national conference specifically for literacy instruction
- Consistency in program management and teaching and learning conditions across programming
- Clear PBLA implementation guidelines for part-time programs and/or rural centres
- Trained volunteers and teaching assistants
- Literacy experts within multiple levels of administration
- Information sessions about PBLA and literacy for leadership

- A more gradual introduction of PBLA in literacy classes over time

**Classroom practices:**

- Access to technology and tech support for learners in the form of a funded position of “Literacy digital navigators”

**Resources:**

- A redesign of the literacy language companion
- A set of “Can Do” Statements for Foundation - 4L
- Literacy checklists for language skills, learning strategies, numeracy skills, and digital literacy skills
- Teaching resources including exemplars, complete modules, real-world task samples, etc.
- A national literacy curriculum framework
- A tracking tool to follow literacy learners through 4L
- An accessible, searchable online image bank with open-access, literacy-friendly images
- Establishment of e-portfolios instead of physical portfolios
- Accessibility features on Avenue.ca
- A national curriculum for teaching the basics of reading and writing

## VI. Findings

The findings across all three feedback methods are remarkably clear and consistent. Robust discussions and written feedback were respectful, engaging, and filled with a passion to see meaningful change, with the best interest of their learners at the forefront. There are many programs and instructors who have been successful implementing some components of PBLA, these successes are attributable to key factors:

- Adequate funding to train and offer professional development to instructors
- Paid time for literacy instructors to prepare materials
- Access to teaching assistants and/or dedicated, trained volunteers
- Passionate literacy champions within the organization at multiple levels
- Permission from funders to modify PBLA requirements
- Access to funding for roles such as a PBLA lead instructor
- Cooperation and transparency amongst service providers within each distinct region
- Smaller class sizes

Similarly, there is consistent feedback from respondents who have expressed frustration and/or challenges implementing PBLA in a literacy context. These key factors are:

### **Organizational/Programming:**

- Lack of consistency across programs for what kinds of modifications have been approved
- Digital literacy of learners and the inequity of access to devices and explicit training
- Pressure from management to produce assessments in a way that does not align with the way literacy learners progress. This leads to anxiety and stress for both instructors and learners
- Lack of adequate training for literacy instruction
- Multi-level, mixed literacy-mainstream, and large class sizes

### **Training:**

- Lack of training and access to literacy-appropriate online resources, as many programs remain online and will continue to be offered in completely online or blended formats
- Digital literacy of learners and the inequity of access to devices and explicit training

### **Resources:**

- Contradictions between the literacy guidelines in ESL for ALL and the requirements of PBLA, particularly in terms of navigating text conventions
- Lack of clarity about how to translate the basics of reading and writing into theme-based real-world tasks, particularly at Foundation and 1L levels
- Lack of training and access to literacy-appropriate online resources, as many programs remain online and will continue to be offered in completely online or blended formats
- Lack of literacy-appropriate materials and teaching resources such as rubrics

Finally, the support and modifications suggested by respondents across feedback methods offers another consistent set of responses. These are:

**Organizational/Programming:**

- Clear guidelines around the available modifications for PBLA at each literacy level and for each mode of program delivery (dedicated literacy class, mixed level, etc.)
- Significant scaling back of requirements for PBLA adherence at emergent levels of literacy (Foundation and 1L)
- Dedicated literacy classes and smaller class sizes

**Training:**

- Paid literacy training opportunities for instructors
- Training opportunities for managers and administrators to raise awareness about the unique learning needs of literacy learners
- Access to digital literacy training for both instructors and learners to be able to provide/receive accessible online instruction
- Guidelines, resources and supports for instructors who work with literacy learners who have physical disabilities and learning disabilities

**Resources:**

- Clear guidelines around the available modifications for PBLA at each literacy level and for each mode of program delivery (dedicated literacy class, mixed level, etc.)
- Easily accessible literacy-friendly teaching materials that meet the needs of literacy learners (task-based, reading and writing fundamentals such as phonics, etc.)
- Easily accessible literacy-friendly digital teaching materials and platforms that meet the needs of literacy learners (task-based, reading and writing fundamentals such as phonics, etc.)
- Easily accessible teaching resources such as exemplars, assessment rubrics, skill and strategy checklists
- A modified language companion that is appropriate for literacy learners at the lower Foundations and CLB 1L levels
- Replacement resource for the language companion that is appropriate for literacy learners
- Guidelines, resources and supports for instructors who work with literacy learners who have physical disabilities and learning disabilities

It is important to note that multiple respondents, across data-collection methods, identified a reluctance to self-identify due to fear of how management and funders would react to their feedback. This signals a lack of trust within some organizations that has implications within a number of the recommendations made herein.

## VII. Effective Practices that were identified through the research

Below are some effective practices for implementing PBLA in classes with literacy learners

- EAL LINC classes dedicated to literacy learners/dedicated time for literacy instruction within mainstream classes
- Small class sizes (12 or fewer)
- Learners grouped together by literacy level
- Frequent classes with fewer than 2.5 hours
- Volunteers/Teaching Assistants
- Literacy trained PBLA Lead- dedicated if possible
- Gradual implementation of PBLA, suggested order
  - Needs Assessments
  - Informal Assessment
  - Skill-Using Activities (recorded and kept in Language Companion)
  - Formal Assessment
  - Reflective Activities
  - Self- Assessment
- Gradual introduction of Language Companion (or modification)
- Paid preparation and collaborative time
- Access to instructor training and professional development (paid)
- Access to clearly defined guidelines around PBLA implementation with literacy learners
- Access to literacy class materials, modifiable, arranged by level (literacy modules, skill-building activities, assessments, exemplars)
- Explicit instruction in acquisition of phonics and decoding
- Explicit strategy instruction
- Access to literacy friendly, royalty free images
- Access to guidelines, resources and supports for instruction of learners with barriers to learning
- Access to technology- devices, support and accessible platforms
- Access to literacy subject matter expert for program officers and management
- Brief “Introduction to Literacy” for leadership

## VIII. Recommendations

The recommendations herein reflect the trends observed from respondents. Recommendations are also in alignment with the Evaluation of the Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) Final Report completed in 2021. Similarly, recommendations around digital literacy and the acquisition of digital skills reflect findings, as communicated in “Valuing Equity First – Digital Exclusion, Inclusion, and Literacy.”<sup>1</sup> It is critical to note that each of these recommendations needs to be considered in terms of the multiple modes of program delivery available across Canada. These include, 1) dedicated literacy class, 2) blended in-person and online, 3) mixed-level, and 4) combined literacy and mainstream.

Realistically, this may mean that each recommendation may need to take a multi-pronged approach to meet the needs of the diverse literacy programs that exist across Canada.

The recommendations fall into three categories.

### First: organizational and programming recommendations.

These recommendations centre around clarifying information about the structure and delivery of PBLA generally. These recommendations could be addressed through email, webinars, or conference presentations. They are meant to disseminate information, so it is available equally to all levels of stakeholders involved in literacy program delivery. Having subject-matter experts at all levels of leadership, be it in programs, organizations, CCLB, and funders, is essential for consistent delivery of information.

### Second: procedural recommendations.

These recommendations centre around making changes to the way that PBLA is mandated and administered nation-wide. Many of these recommendations address the current discrepancies in program delivery.

### Third: material recommendations.

These recommendations centre around the creation of resources to aid in the successful implementation of PBLA in classes with literacy learners. Many of these material-based recommendations are modelled after successful adaptations and interventions in the integration of PBLA in classes with literacy learners.

Each recommendation takes into account the reported successes, challenges, supports, and modifications collected throughout the research activity.

#### **I. Organizational/programming recommendations**

1. Provide consistent and transparent program requirements across providers. There is a lot of confusion and frustration caused by a lack of consistency across programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Campano, Marco. “Valuing Equity First – Digital Exclusion, Inclusion, and Literacy.” Jun 16, 2022. KM4S. <https://km4s.ca/2022/06/valuing-equity-first-digital-exclusion-inclusion-and-literacy/>

In particular, respondents expressed a lot of confusion about what kinds of modifications are allowed in the implementation of PBLA in classes with literacy learners. This, in turn, causes friction between instructors and management who each have different expectations for how literacy learners learn and what they can realistically achieve within a set number of classroom hours.

Practical considerations:

- What does PBLA look like in part-time programs or programs that meet twice weekly? What does it look like for classes that only meet online?
  - What adaptations are acceptable when implementing PBLA with emergent literacy learners, particularly Foundation and 1L students? How do these adaptations work practically as an instructor gradually familiarizes learners with certain concepts? In what ways can we standardize the gradual scaffolding of PBLA practices in these emergent literacy classes?
2. Make it explicitly clear to instructors, management, and all stakeholders that the acquisition of the basics (and specifically reading/writing/numeracy) is in itself a learning task and therefore a real-world task. That is, clarify and standardize that language acquisition within emergent literacy levels is a real-world task and demonstrating this knowledge can be assessed as such.<sup>2</sup>

Examples of reading and writing tasks within emergent literacy classes:

- Holding a pencil
- Uppercase and lowercase letter formation
- Sequentially alphabetizing letters versus random identification
- Alphabetization of early sight words, etc.

The two above recommendations address the current disconnect in how programs have implemented the elements of PBLA within literacy classrooms. While some organizations have adapted the elements of PBLA into the teaching method itself, others have found the PBLA elements have disrupted the instruction of the basic skills of reading and writing. The majority of these disruptions are tied directly to the number of assessment artefacts within a specific time period. This frustration is tied to the above recommendations. It is critical to clearly communicate the ways in which the discrete elements of PBLA can be used within the literacy classroom to shape the teaching and learning process. This needs to be modeled within different teaching conditions in order to account for the diverse literacy programming currently in place.

## II. Procedural-based recommendations

1. Significant scaling back of adherence to PBLA requirements within emergent literacy levels (Foundation and 1L) and a well-paced timeline for how each distinct element can be introduced between 2L and 4L. This was the most widely consistent

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<sup>2</sup>For example, tracing letters legibly does not need to be within a settlement-specific writing context (i.e., an adapted job application form). It is always already a real-world task tied to the learning process.



comment throughout the research activity, that PBLA is too onerous for the lowest levels of emergent learners. “Literacy learners, without the benefits of previous formal education, cannot begin to recognize the implications of PBLA \*until\* they have some semblance of understanding of what it is to learn. This will emerge somewhere between learning to hold a pencil, write the alphabet, decipher letter/sound relationships and beginning to decode.” Alongside this, a clear pathway for the “soft” introduction of some PBLA elements in the emergent levels (i.e., establishment of some pictorial and oral needs assessments and learner reflections). These elements, however, should not be requirements but rather suggestions or ideals.

Practical recommendations:

- Use of pictorial needs assessments of one or two topics within a theme
  - Use of simple pictorial representations of whether the activity was easy/difficult, good/no good
  - Implementation of a gradual progression from pictorial to word-based practices
  - Use of primarily skill-using assessments with checklists as milestones are achieved
2. Paid training and PD time, or a dedicated digital navigator, to support instructors and learners alike, in their implementation and daily interaction with the technology used in their organization.

Practical recommendations:

- Training with instructors prior to the start of their teaching assignments
  - Training with learners within orientation, prior to starting language classes
  - Videos that review processes for accessing the digital platforms and processes used regularly within programming so that they are readily available to support learners who may have forgotten
  - Documentation of all information related to digital skills in programming so that it is available for distribution to all instructors
3. Standardize funding for paid time for literacy instructors to prepare materials. Due to the much higher need for responsive classroom materials, especially if attempting to implement PBLA, literacy instructors often modify or prepare materials during unpaid hours. This leads to instructor burn out as well as to a high amount of instructor turnover. As literacy learners are a vulnerable population, maintaining consistent, experienced literacy instructors is a high priority. Though funding structures are different across the country, there has been a demonstrable need to standardize teaching conditions to ensure consistency and transparency across the field.

Practical considerations:

- Meeting funders' needs and the funding of future programming puts pressure on organizations to show success meet funding contribution agreements in a way that may de-prioritize instructors' and learners' needs
  - Provincial funding differs nationally
4. Standardize funding for paid training time for literacy instructors. Due to the specialized nature of literacy instruction, all new instructors should have access to and be compensated for high-quality literacy training. Like the above recommendation, this will ensure that literacy learners, as a vulnerable population, are supported by instructors who are knowledgeable about their unique learning needs.

Practical considerations:

- No control over provincial funding
  - Meeting funders' needs and the funding of future programming puts pressure on organizations to show success in a way that may de-prioritize instructors' and learners' needs
5. Provide funding for literacy teaching assistants, volunteer training, and, when there are a significant number of literacy learners, a literacy lead instructor. This kind of support lessens the load of instructors working with large class sizes, multi-level classes, and classes with both mainstream and literacy learners.
6. Make a plan for addressing the intersection between literacy learners, learners with disabilities, learners with mental illness, and learners who have experienced trauma. These four categories often overlap, and instructors often teach individuals who fall into two or more of the above categories. Instructors are typically trained only as language practitioners but are often asked to make learning accommodations they are not trained to address. There is a need for the development and implementation of supports to address the above intersections and ensure instructors have the capacity to focus on the language acquisition of their learners. While this is a deviation from the primary premise of this research activity, it cannot be ignored that there are a significant disproportionate number of learners in the literacy learner population that also have been recognized to have other barriers to learning. This compounds that already present challenges of implementing successful PBLA programming in classes with literacy learners. As one respondent notes: " I had students with debilitating disabilities (Down's Syndrome, multiple sclerosis, cerebral stroke, vision impairments, learning disabilities, etc.) thrown into the mix of literacy learners and CLB 1 learners, and I had to go to my manager to voice out that I had zero training in special needs education, that PBLA was next to impossible with these learners, and also that it was hugely unfair to the students themselves to be placed in a mainstream class, to the other learners too,

and to me as a teacher as well. It would be really great for a teacher's voice to be heard and his or her genuine concerns to be accorded the attention they truly warranted, and not be misconstrued as a resistance to PBLA implementation."

Practical considerations:

- Some organizations have called for the creation of a third stream of funding to address the needs of this extremely vulnerable population by supporting more community-based language training in an informal way. Support could be provided at the stage of proposal writing when these needs are present.

### III. Material-based recommendations

It should be noted that many of the materials/resources suggested below are already in existence but currently not developed as a national standard or shared between organizations. Full curriculums, checklists, online modules, adaptations of existing resources for literacy learners are being used by some organizations in various parts of Canada.

1. Develop more modules specifically for literacy learners. Instead of making them "multi-level," design them in a way that allows for flexibility for both dedicated literacy classes and mainstream classes with literacy learners embedded within them. Use the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), flexible learning environments, and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences, to guide this development. Include very specific information about how to adapt the module to meet the needs of literacy learners. This includes specific guidelines for lesson preparation, lesson delivery, and assessment. All materials must be shared on Tutela as a matter of practice.
2. Develop guidelines, support materials, and teaching materials for the "basics" of reading and writing skills (letter/sound discrimination, phonics, etc.). An ideal recommendation would be the establishment of a curriculum for the basics that includes numeracy and digital skills that runs from Foundation to 2L that can be used coincidentally with mainstream pre-benchmark and CLB 2 classes (using principles of UDL to guide the development).
3. Adapt or modify the literacy language companion. There are elements of the companion that instructors appreciate and find useful. However, much of the language and formal elements of the companion do not meet the conditions recommended in *ESL for ALL* (vocabulary, font size, etc.). This material could be re-designed to meet the needs of literacy learners in two phases: emergent (Foundation - 1L) and intermediate (2L - 4L). The information should be literacy-appropriate and include clear, colourful images. Pages should use simple numbering conventions as opposed to the current system. The materials should have similar content as the current language companion (food, clothing, body parts, weather, etc.), however, presented much more simply, with plenty of white space. Critically – the material should be made available both digitally and hard-copy. Individual organizations can ask for hard copy if they would like but have the choice how they will use

the resources in their classrooms based on their needs and unique learning contexts.<sup>3</sup>

4. Create a robust online course for teaching literacy learners (or adapt an existent organization's in-house training program). The course should cover the basics of literacy instruction and provide participants an opportunity to practice and demonstrate their knowledge. The information in the course should remain available for participants even after the completion of the course. Available across the country to all LINC/ESL providers, instructors should be compensated in some way for taking this course. This could be, for example, through allocating training time as part of their paid work hours or claiming the hours spent in the course as over time.
5. Create a robust, accessible online platform for teaching literacy learners. Content should be accessible and progress along the digital literacy continuum in complexity while remaining level appropriate. Avenue.ca exists as the online LMS however there is still much to be done around ensuring content and principles for teaching literacy in an online setting are maintained to ensure adult learning best practices are at the forefront of design.
6. Create more resources that are accessible online for those programs that will continue to remain online or in blended formats. Ensure resources are uploaded and aligned to PBLA through Tutela as programs will continue to be delivered in both online and blended formats.
7. Create checklists and "Can Do" Statements that address the various outcomes in language skills, numeracy, digital skills, and learning strategies. Many organizations that reported successes implementing PBLA have developed checklists to give their instructors, as well as their learners, a clear pathway to language acquisition. Checklists can and should support understanding of what to include as authentic tasks to show learner progression within emergent literacy levels. They demonstrate progression to all stakeholders: the learner, the instructor, the organization, and the funders.

Overall, many of the recommendations are interrelated and responsive to one another. If there is a significant re-thinking around how to support the integration of PBLA within literacy, and if this is clearly communicated across stakeholders, then this will lead to more time instructors can spend on the "basics" of reading and writing skills. If there is clarity around how PBLA can be modified within the diverse teaching and learning contexts present in LINC classes, and this clarity reaches management and administration, then instructors would have the agency to modify as needed to meet the needs of their learners. If there are more supports provided for instructors in terms of both material needs (checklists, modules, clear guidelines and materials for teaching the basics of reading and writing) and professional needs (access to teaching assistants and trained

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<sup>3</sup> An organization may choose to bind the language companion in a duo-tang for the learners and they may have a class folder or smaller binder for their daily worksheets; choose only to use a small binder for class work and access the language companion digitally; choose to laminate the pages of the language companion for in-class use within the literacy classroom, etc. This kind of flexibility would meet the needs of the diverse array of conditions within which literacy learners are taught.

volunteers/paid time for material preparation/modification and ongoing training and professional development/opportunities to network and collaborate), then the current trend of instructor burnout and high instructor turnover will be mitigated.

Integrating elements of PBLA in classes with literacy learners is not an impossible task. There are clear steps that can be taken to ensure literacy learners receive effective, equitable, and consistent instruction that is responsive to their unique learning needs and contexts. First and foremost is recognizing the passion and dedication of instructors who choose to work with literacy learners. Their teaching conditions are often taxing, and the realities of front-line literacy instruction can be overwhelming. The overarching theme of these recommendations is to respect the dedication and expertise of these instructors and give them the tools they need to set them, and in turn their learners, up for success.

## Appendix A: Survey results

Question 4: Are there any other details you'd like to share? Details could include number of classes you teach; number of classes at your organization; language level of classes you teach, etc.
We used to have a dedicated literacy class. Now we have the classes blended with regular LINC classes.
We offer Stage 1 and 2 with many Literacy learners in Stage 1.
Lower levels- dedicated literacy classes; CLB 3,4 literacy students integrated.
2 literacy classes.
We have two literacy teachers who give literacy support to clients one-on-one. The clients come out of their regular class for instruction.
Tends to be mixed skill levels.
Teach two literacy classes per day. Foundation and mixed level older adult literacy.
We teach a blended literacy class with CLB level 1.
I teach 2 classes daily: Reading & Writing CLB/Listening & Speaking.
14 classes over a week period, typically 1 hr/class in length, 1 to 3 students per class.
There is one level 3/4 class that is primarily literacy learners, many of the other levels (PB - 4) have literacy learners integrated into mainstream classes.
I teach a morning LINC 5 class to 20 students and an afternoon LINC 1-2 class to 10 students.
It's a hybrid class; most students attend in person, but there are a few that attend class online because they live far away and because they are seniors and are not comfortable attending class in person due to COVID.
Teachers are finding literacy learners beyond CLB 4. This is challenging when already teaching a multilevel class i.e. CLB 1/2 or 3/4 and literacy learners are included in these classes in both CLB levels.
I teach a literacy class.
I teach foundation literacy 5 days/15 hours a week.
I teach 2 classes, an online class and the other in-person. Both are LINC 1-2. The online class has 17 students and the latter has 14 students.
From Literacy to CLB 6.
When enrollment allows, we have dedicated literacy classes. At times, non-literacy and literacy students are together.
It is difficult having literacy learners in classes with non literacy learners especially at the CLB 4 Level.
I teach two classes CLB 2/3 literacy students and mainstream students.
I teach CLB 4 and a CLB 5-6 class. Some students have had literacy issues that still slow them down.
One class- levels between PFL to 1.
The class levels are usually multilevel - CLB 1/2 sometimes CLB1/2/3.
There are five literacy classes at our centre ranging from CLB1L to CLB 2L.
Both; sometimes they are integrated and sometimes we have room for a separate class.

We have a mix. Often the literacy learners are not identified or they don't want to come to class at a certain time when there may be literacy classes available so they are placed in the regular streams...or teachers are not informed and 'move' these students too quickly because they feel they have been in a particular level 'long enough'.

I teach an integrated CLB 1-2 class with many Literacy learners within the class. Our centre does have a Foundation Literacy level teacher and class too.

We have a full literacy stream from Foundation to 4L. We also have a CLB stream from CLB 1 to 4. Literacy learners can transfer to CLB stream if the teacher feels they are capable.

I have only one literacy class. My class is totally online.

I teach a night school class with literacy and CLB 1 students. Many different literacy levels.

I teach two literacy classes: 1L-2L; LitF-1L and there are. There are 3 other dedicated literacy classes and 2 more being added soon. As well, we have literacy students in our mainstream CLB 1-4 classes.

If literacy learners, the class is smaller. we do not take foundation, only 1L, learners need to know how to hold a pencil.

I teach CLB 3/4 but have about 4 or 5 Literacy students in the regular ESL class.

Literacy learners are also integrated if their speaking benchmarks are high enough and they have one literacy benchmark.

I teacher a mixed level (Literacy/CLB 1) class.

The Burnaby School District LINC program offers the following LINC literacy courses: Foundation, 1L, 2L, 3L. However, because we don't have enough space in our literacy classes for all of our clients who have low 1st language literacy, we also have literacy learners in most of our Stage 1 courses. We offer 13 Stage 1 courses and 6 Stage 2 courses. I teach Foundations and 1L.

Students have limited or interrupted education prior to coming to Canada. some of them have up to 10 years, but are still struggling in a regularly paced class. Class sized range from 16 - 22 students.

I teach 1L/2L.

We also have mainstream classes which include lit learners.

Our program has some lower level literacy classes, and once students get to CLB 2 they move to a mainstream class.

one class three times per week, total 6hrs.

We also have Literacy learners integrated into mainstream classes.

We have both a dedicated literacy class for low-level learners and higher literacy learners are in mainstream classes.

I taught an integrated Foundation Literacy through L1, pre-benchmark, and mainstream L1 class until November 2020.

One-one-one.

I teach LINC 2. We have some dedicated literacy classes for LINC 1-3. However, they are full. Now my LINC 2 class has about 50% literacy students.

All our LINC classes are multi-level as follows: LIT (PFL & FL)/CLB 1, CLB 1/2, & CLB 3/4. The LIT (PFL & FL)/CLB 1 class is limited to 12 learners. All other classes have 20 learners. Literacy levels including PFL & FL are mainstreamed with non-literacy learners.
I teach up to 10 with PFL/FL reading/writing. And Pre-benchmark l/s.
It is called a literacy class but besides 5 students, the rest are literate seniors.
(I have just retired but have taught ESL literacy classes for 15 plus years.
We have both dedicated Literacy classes as well as a integrated into our mainstream.
I teach Level 1 Literacy onsite and a Level 1 & 2 class online.
Our literacy classes are split into 5 levels: Foundation, Literacy 1 or Phase1, L2, L3, and L4.
I taught 1L for the past 3 years and recently got a CLB class.
I have 3 literacy learners in a group of 21 mainstream learners.
The majority of our clients are literacy learners. They are refugees who've had very little to no schooling in their own language, much less English.
We have beginner literacy and this year we have a 3/4 literacy class as well.
A single class of up to 18 people made up of mixed levels of CLB (two levels), both literate and illiterate learners, starting the program on a continuous, while getting paid CAD\$21/hr as an instructor!
Four classes: Lit/CLB 1, CLB 2/3, CLB 4/5, CLB 5-7.
We have both situations, depending on the classes across the different communities we serve.
We have a large program with enough students registered to have dedicated literacy classes; however, recently, placement has mixed both literacy and regular stream into the same classes.
We have a few Literacy classes in the morning and after.
Literacy classes have been established, but have been harder to maintain with continuous intake and number of students. My classes often become a mix of non-literacy learners and literacy learners, depending on the numbers at the time.
We have a Foundation Literacy and Literacy 1 class together but CLB 2 to CLB 4 have literacy learners in them.
I teach foundations and a mom and baby class.
I teach three literacy classes, each class with a total of ten learners. There are six literacy class at the organization and 13 in total.
Some benchmarks are pre CLB and get a Literacy support teacher supplement to LINC class.
We have dedicated literacy classes in our full time program and literacy learners integrated in our part time programming.
We have both dedicated literacy classes as well as literacy learners in mainstream classes.
Proportion of Literacy learners decreases as levels get higher.
Our program has an EAL Literacy stream and a LINC stream. Our literacy classes range from Foundations L to 4L, with an average of 5-10 students per class.
I teach a 1L class in am and FNDL-1L in pm. Our program has 8 designated literacy classes.
I teach Level 1 with students who are 1L. I had half of them as literacy students.
We have about 500 students in our school. I am a lead who teaches two classes; 3 and 4 part time. I do have literacy students in my class.



Conversation Circles.
I have about 60 students in a CLB 2/3 literacy & regular mix class. It's a part-time online class (6 hours/week).
Teach Level 1-3 which includes PFL, FL, to Level 3. It's very challenging, the levels are too varied!
I teach levels 1 and 2.
F/1L
I teach separate literacy and CLB 3 classes.
CLB 3L-4L
There is only 1 dedicated literacy class, foundations, at one provider in Vancouver Region. My organization has 2 literacy foundations classes in our Surrey region. So, most literacy students are integrated into regular LINC classes, particularly LINC1. I teach a LINC 1 class, but get literacy/foundations students in my class occasionally, because there is no Literacy class in the area. I teach in central Vancouver.
27 part time classes, Foundations - CLB 5,6.
I teach 2L/3L. We have a literacy stream which goes from Foundations to 4L. We offer literacy classes mornings and afternoons and one Foundations class in the evening.
1 literacy learner in a CLB Pre-2 class - much less than ideal.
Morning, afternoon and evening are pre-lit and pre-CLB with afternoon focused on only literacy learners. Linc 1/2 classes have literacy and regular learners.
We also have 1 dedicated literacy class, but the survey won't let me check two boxes.
Our lowest level is CLB 5, however we are finding that literacy learners continue to require extra support and slower lessons.

<b>Question 5: Do you or does your program implement PBLA with your literacy learners?</b>
Most aspects of PBLA are too abstract for literacy learners and have limited usefulness. Developing organization skills for activities in a Language Companion is the bound of their usefulness at low levels.
But challenging due to multilevel classrooms & inconsistent attendance.
I was a trained PBLA Lead but have to adapt assessments to fit literacy student needs.
Beginning literacy levels teachers don't practice all aspects of PBLA because of the low proficiency of their learners.
Over pandemic haven't conducted formal assessments or needs assessments for theme work.
Now fully back on site I'm incorporating client needs/interests back into the classroom.
I am new so all aspects being implemented is gradual and with support from the support team at head office.
WITH HEAVY SUPPORT (to complete inventory sheets, put handouts/assessments into the correct place and in the correct order (chronologically), for skill building/skill using - learner needs more support and help to complete the activities, sometimes teacher reads and students verbally respond to show understanding. Language Companions in the lower levels (PB, Level 1) have a multitude of information that is not used or above literacy learners skill level.

New literacy learners need much guidance and individual attention to understand some of the concepts around needs assessments, goal setting and review, learner reflections. Having a consistent routine which implements these concepts by having the same routing approach and artefact helps to build these abstract concepts.
We implement PBLA, but it often seems meaningless to do so. It is not easily grasped by the literacy students the reasons for the PBLA tools.
My literacy students do poorly on timed reading activities.
PBLA assessments are very difficult for literacy and LINC 1 learners.
We are working on implementing more and more. :)
There need to be more specific PBLA benchmarks for literacy learners recognizing sound of consonants or can decide using CVC construction. Or like writes on the line...
Metacognitive skills which inform PBLA are difficult to explain to literacy learners who have very limited education in their native language and come from traditions where the instructor leads the class and manages knowledge transfer.
All aspects are desired to be implemented, but we modify as needed.
I do not implement PBLA with my literacy learner however I think some PBLA is implemented to the literacy learners in other classes at the organization.
Our organization implements all aspects of PBLA with our literacy learners although in a much reduced pace and other adaptations as needed.
CCLB does not have enough modules for literacy and it would be helpful.
PBLA is confusing for literacy students and not effective.
We have been fully implementing PBLA for at least the past 5 years.
At this particular class I am teaching, my literacy students have disabilities and PBLA cannot be applied on them. They cannot be assessed. But I am a literacy teacher now for 5 years. The class I was teaching as a literacy was a dedicated one and it was more useful and we applied PBLA on those learners.
Some of us do more, but I choose to only use some aspects of PBLA. Many parts are overwhelming to the students and take many hours away from language instruction.
I think a modified PBLA program would be MOST effective for a dedicated lit class.
My LA and LB clients do not use PBLA Language Companions.
Goal setting, self-assessment, peer assessment, inventory update, needs assessment were delivered with instructor support, or as partner/group activities.
The focus is on reading and writing assessments.
I must stress that very few aspects of PBLA are implemented. Formal assessments are rarely done, as they are unnecessary for the teacher to see what and how the students are doing with their learning. As so many activities in class are skill-using, it's a much better use of my time and energy as a teacher to observe the students in class, give immediate feedback and of course, use all of this information as needs assessment for further lessons.
I have adapted PBLA for PFL.
The Literacy class is a par-time class and I spend a lot of my time doing goal setting etc. with my students and the main reason they are there - which is to learn to read and write - gets lost!

I am not fully trained in PBLA, I believe there are PBLA aspects included.
PBLA is not completely implemented in our Foundation classes for reading and writing. A checklist has been compiled for those 2 skills and when students have mastered 70% of the requirements, they are able to move to L1 in those skills. Speaking and listening are assessed using the criteria at the CLB 1 level. Speaking and listening for all Literacy levels are assessed with CLB requirements at a level about the Literacy level. For example, speaking and listening for L2 are assessed at a CLB 3 level.
For Foundation and 1L, we didn't do needs assessment, goal setting or reflections.
Why are we implementing PBLA to literacy learners if the experts found that "PBLA may not be helpful for clients...with literacy needs." (Evaluation of Language Training Services) <a href="https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/E4-2018_LanguageTrain_Eng.pdf">https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/E4-2018_LanguageTrain_Eng.pdf</a>
It is quite challenging.
All aspects are used, but progress is very slow with literacy learners.
It is very difficult to explain and apply PBLA components at literacy level because they don't have the skills they need to understand and apply it just yet.
Depending on the level, some aspects of PBLA are easier to integrate and explain (I.E. needs assessments and themes). However, some parts of PBLA are quite abstract, and challenging for the learner to understand, and I don't feel like it always supports language learning. Instead it often feels like a lot of paperwork and checklists to maintain the up-keep of the Language Companions. In my class, student self reflections and formative/summative assessments are done informally (and often have many images or no paper copy).
This refers to the Foundation Literacy and Lit 1 class only. Lit 2 to 4 are integrated into mainstream CLB classes so they do all the aspects.
Officially all aspects of PBLA are implemented, but I do not do all that is required on paper and I don't know if the other instructors do either.
The full time literacy teacher would have to answer that - probably not.
It is a challenge to implement all aspects of PBLA at literacy levels.
All aspects of PBLA are implemented for 2L - 4L students; some aspects are used for FNDL-1L students.
Literacy learners have difficulty with some elements of PBLA.
PBLA is not used in Conversation Circles, but we do ongoing assessment of level improvement by using a portfolio.
PBLA works at higher levels, not necessarily at Literacy levels as there is very limited activities and things that you can test and teach. at this level they're just grasping alphabets and sounds. Learning to understand the technical side of the language rather than the practical side. For PBLA they have to be above a certain level to implement. Very challenging!
All aspects are integrated but they shouldn't be.
Reading, writing, and listening are implemented.
A few modifications are made for Foundation level.

Foundations and 1L classes are using an alternative to PBLA. 2L and higher are using all aspects of PBLA.

All aspects of PBLA are attempted, as expected by our admin.

Listening and speaking are according to PBLA assessments. Reading and writing use a variety of resources from Decoda; internal designed visual assessments.

We follow PBLA as much as possible for literacy learners.

As they are part of our regular classes, we have no option but to implement PBLA with our literacy learners just like our non-literacy learners.

**Question 6: Does your program integrate needs assessments, formal assessments, reflective activities, or self-assessments into classrooms with literacy learners?**

Formal assessments seem to create more fear and hinder progress. Informal assessments are much more useful, and at the heart of portfolio-based learning. Doing mini formal assessments are a relic of an archaic testing system.

Challenging at low CLB levels.

I'm working toward more reflective activities and self-assessment.

My reflective activities are now more general, and less formal, than they were in the past.

The elements are practiced more frequently with CLB 2L and Up.

these elements are all done at a very limited capacity and not necessarily each month.

I have not always found self-assessment to be effective with low beginner literacy learners.

These have all been implemented at the higher literacy levels, but not with total consistency.

reflective and self-assessments are quite difficult with the level 1 or 1LL classes.

With support as needed to complete the activities, sometimes student is provided with 1-1 tutoring to help build skills and develop skills to be more confident and successful in the classes. Prior, the TA's would help with this, but now we don't have any TA (due to funding), so we have 1 or 2 volunteers who help us with these students. Reflections can be more challenging and require more support and guidance for literacy learners to complete.

Self assessment is done one by one.

Skill using activities.

As a teacher of foundations, CLB 1 & 2, I would definitely advocate that no PBLA elements be introduced to students until level 2L or higher.

I also make observations.

Formal assessment is only one of the artefacts we count but we find it helpful for the mainstream students.

This is very difficult for literacy and LINC 1 students.

Self-assessment in particular, is difficult particularly for our pre-CLB students.

For the past 2 years, online and hybrid have been difficult to follow PBLA with literacy.

Self assessments are sometimes not understood.

Not all of these are being done 100% of the time, but it has been discussed in recent PD and the instructors are all working at integrating these into our classes.

Program RWT geared and with online learning it limits time as you are engaging so many things. Learners should have some in-person tech training beyond logging in as ongoing part of an instructors time is used for tech. Also, an issue when learners do not have videos on and are non-responsive. This is an ongoing issue as we have no idea 'where' students are. As time went on, learners do engage more; however, when you get a new class/student it is like starting all over again.

Very difficult to get literacy learners to engage in these tasks independently!!

For the past two years I have been using Moodle Choice activities with images to do needs assessments. I have been using Moodle quiz activity type to do formal assessment, reflective activities and self-assessment activities.

It takes a very long time to explain the reflective and self assessment activities to literacy learners- they come from different learning traditions. PBLA is based on a very Western model of education.

I would say that reflective activities, self-assessment, and needs assessment are used less readily with literacy learners, especially at the lower levels. However, teachers do attempt these elements with their literacy learners.

Needs assessments are very basic and pictorial. I find reflective and self assessment s require a lot of explanation and it's difficult for them to understand what is being asked so hard to get to a choice or decision.

I understand why needs assessments are useful and I agree that they are important, but I must admit that I rarely use them with my Foundations students. I have often thought that it would be good to have a discussion among LINC literacy instructors about the curriculum for LINC Foundations and 1L.

At the moment none. Because I have 2 literacy students both have disabilities to a high degree. I can say special learners.

Formal assessment - as in PBLA "Assessment Tasks."

Needs assessment was integrated into literacy before the pandemic, but is not practical anymore with the program we're doing.

I use SU activities instead of formal assessments for literacy.

See previous comment.

\*Beginning\* to integrate self-assessment.

We have done the best we can. Learners struggle with needs assessment, reflective activities and self-assessment.

Self assessment is done in a limited way.

These are very difficult with low-level literacy learners and may not be worth it as they most often do not understand what they are being asked to do.

Any kind of formal PBLA activities, such as the ones listed above are not doable for Foundation level students, who are still working to grasp basic phonics, letter recognition and reproduction etc. The effort needed by both teacher and students to explain/grasp/implement these elements does not justify the "reward" in terms of outcome.

We also do goal setting and skill using activities.

With literacy and low levels I find it hard to do meaningful self reflection.
Needs assessments, reflective activities and self-assessments can be challenging at times, especially with lower literacy levels. These seem to be aspects of education that are embedded in students of a young age and then come naturally to educated adults. For uneducated adults with low English levels, these concepts can be difficult to bring across.
Sometimes we would discuss if an activity was easy or hard, or if students enjoyed an activity.
Reflection is very difficult with literacy learners.
Self-assessment seems to be very difficult for our learners to do as they seem to lack the skills required to self-critique.
We do "semi-formal" assessments at the lowest literacy levels and formal, but fewer, assessments at the higher literacy levels. The recommended schedule from the CCLB/PBLA for assessments does not work well with literacy students who often need *much* longer to be successful at a given task.
They are laborious and learners don't really understand their purpose.
It varies from class to class. Some literacy teachers may include reflective activities and self-assessment.
Completing reflective activities and the self assessment has ton done under teacher's supervision and it is extremely time consuming.
Depending on the level of the class and the ability of the students.
This is referring to our Foundation Literacy and Literacy 1 class only.
I do needs assessments but often the learners say they cannot choose a topic and ask me to do so. When I ask why, they express that they do not know what they do not know and need to know. If I then ask them, so you want to learn about such and such, then they all agree. So at the end of the day, the decision usually lies with me . We do formal assessment weekly or bi- monthly and this is often stressful for me. The learners memorize the correct responses to pass the assessments, but shortly afterwards they have forgotten. They may see the same words in a different context , but unable to read them.
Self Assessments may be used sometimes, using Can Do statements.
Yes, but in simple ways.
We are required by our funding agreement to implement all aspects of PBLA with our literacy classes.
I teach a Hybrid literacy class. Considering the extra cognitive load that online class gives to my students, we try to use handout packages. So the above-mentioned artefacts are not accessed through Google classroom.
With lower levels it is a challenge but we do what we can.
This would vary in each classroom, depending on the literacy and language level.
Needs assessments, Refection Activities and Self-Assessments require a great deal of instructor support for literacy students to understand and complete.
All or none depending on literacy level.
These can be more challenging to implement with CLB 1 and Literacy learners.
Self assessment might be conducted verbally only.

It is difficult for literacy learners to think about goal setting and needs assessment - they depend on the teacher to tell them what they need to know and are mostly not capable of self assessment or reflective at the CLB3/4 level.
Since it's a Conversation Circle, the assessment is informal.
They're a good bunch to teach as they are thirsty for knowledge, therefore there is always a need for resources as in volunteers in class and assistants.
Some of the ones above are not conducive to literacy classes.
It is too much for literacy.
The students at this level do not yet have the language or understanding to do needs assessments or self-reflection.
Some are done less since we have been online.
depends on the level, we have Literacy students in all our classes and levels.
I find self-assessment to be really difficult with literacy learners.
Some of these are only possible with volunteer/family helpers.
We include peer assessments and "teacher for a day" skill-using as assessment.

**Question 7: Do you (or do your instructors if you are an administrator) have any formal training in literacy instruction?**

Interned in a literacy class.
This is a HUGE gap that we would like to address but it is very difficult to accommodate given the teaching schedule and budget limitations.
Our teachers don't have formal training in literacy instruction but they are all TESL certified and have taken the PBLA training.
It has been a while.
ISANS TELLS training- not sure if this is "formal" training however.
only training from Tutela webinars and TESL conferences.
All Stage 1 PBLA teachers need to understand how to teach phonics and reading/literacy acquisition skills.
My training is on-going, my administration has formal training and assists.
Some exposure/training during CLB Bootcamp, TESL certificate, however I don't have a lot of formal training in this area.
I have been teaching this level for about five years now and I have met literacy learners from a variety of backgrounds.
I have learned through trainings offered on CCLB (ESL for ALL) and PD workshops as well as using resources found online or by personal research. Formal training on teaching discrete reading/writing skills and strategies as well as creating suitable materials using the strands of the continuum as a guide to progress would be helpful for teachers who have literacy learners in their regular CLB classes.
There is no separate class set aside for PFL or FL learners.

I've attended numerous PD and workshops, so feel very competent with literacy learners. However, literacy learners with special needs or more specific learning difficulties are placed in a regular class with no resources to accommodate them.
Instructors need formal training in literacy instruction.
As PBLA Lead, I do, some of the teachers have some literacy training from TESL Ontario webinars.
In my certificate program, literacy teaching was touched upon, but I did not take a dedicated course on this.
Unsure what counts as "formal" training. Have had some online PD on lit training as well as on-the-job training.
There are so many levels of literacy and people tend to only get support at the initial stages...this stream needs to be followed through at different levels and at a different pace of class!
I do not have formal training specifically for literacy however I have taken many PD workshops and webinars for use with literacy learners. I have read and use the CLB - ESL for ALL resource guides.
I am an administrator. My organization has provided additional training to literacy instructors.
I observed literacy class for one week before I started teaching.
I have my TESL Certificate, but have not taken any specific training for literacy. What I've learned, I've learned through experience, other lit. teachers and PD events.
Most staff have taken the ISANS literacy course.
I don't personally, but other instructors, yes. The problem arises once they place a couple of lit. clients in the regular class just to fill it up.
I completed a 2-year intensive literacy instruction program with a cohort of elementary-school teachers. It finally gave me the theory and practical methodology that I had been looking for. Good paid professional development in the details of literacy instruction makes all the difference and needs to be available to LINC instructors.
I have gained the skill through experience.
I don't have any formal training - but I have benefited from my colleagues experience – and from my own years.
One course dedicated during my TESL/OCELT program at a community college, multiple webinars and some online specialty course.
Very limited formal training.
We did have PD sessions emphasizing on literacy learner needs.
Classroom teacher and resource teachers have training.
But very little.
ESL for All, in house literacy training with our Literacy Lead.
TELLS course completed.
Prior to entering the ESL field, I was trained as a voluntary literacy instructor working with English speakers. Completed the ESL for ALL courses available through CCLB.
There are many resources and materials available to me. I take it upon myself to educate myself and talk to supervisors/team leads anytime I have a question or concern.



There has been tremendous turnover in Literacy and taking people through ESL of ALL is a major challenge in terms of professional development.
As a result of a 3-year provincial MCCSS-funded ESL Literacy Project, our instructors received targeted training using the CCLB literacy courses plus extra materials specially developed under the project. The Project has ended. We now have a dedicated LINC Literacy Lead, who was trained in the Project, addressing our LINC literacy learners' needs.
ISANS Course, CCLB Orientation to ESL for ALL, Numerous PDs.
I have 10 years of experience teaching literacy and I was a kindergarten teacher a long time ago but I am not sure what you mean by formal training.
Not sure if it is formal; LESLLA conferences and anything I could get my hands on. I have read every article there is on literacy I think.
I have an education degree and have taught elementary school in the past, I apply the same principles.
We value any professional development in these areas.
Could always use more!
mostly on the job and collaboration with peers, also a background in special education.
I just completed the TELLS Course from Nova Scotia.
ESL for ALL is good.
Most have years of experience.
Some of my fellow teachers though don't even have any formal training in teaching adults, let alone literacy learners!!!!!!
Some instructors do.
I have learned a lot through my teaching experience with the literacy levels. I always wished I could that extra time we were spending on PBLA to be used on actual teaching and practicing what my students had learned.
I have my Education degree, and I've taken the "Online Orientation to ESL for ALL" course offered by CCLB.
Just completed ISANS literacy program - teaching EAL literacy learners.
I have been teaching literacy for a long time, but when I took the TESL course, it was not specific to literacy learners. Over the years, I have gained experience through trial and error, conferences, webinars , research etc. But I have never taken any courses specific to adult literacy.
depends on what you define as formal. Webinars? Conferences TESL Ontario, TESL Toronto?
We have watched Tutela webinar on Modifying for Literacy Learners. We would love more training.
Most literacy instructors have completed an online TELLS course with ISANS.
We get trained for PBLA not Literacy specifically.
I have completed all the literacy training offered by the CCLB. I would love to receive more literacy training that is less PBLA focused, and more focused on the process of teaching/learning how to read in the skill-building phase.
4/8 literacy teachers have formal training; all have literacy-specific PD.

A small amount from the UK.
My only training is from webinars and TESL conferences.
I have some self taught reading and using the Literacy for all books but nothing formal.
Mostly through conference sessions and experience.
ESL for ALL.
As ESL/LINC instructors we are usually assigned classes from Levels 1-8. You're not just dedicated to a level. Therefore training for just Literacy doesn't help as we may use it in one year and not the next due to level changes.
I have completed TESL teacher certified program certificate.
Only ESL for ALL.
I have only taken the ESL for adult literacy learners training online.
Some of our teachers were lucky to complete the ISANS Literacy TELL course, just recently.
I took an additional course in teaching literacy in my CERTESL program.
I may have had some training during my degree 25 years ago, not sure.
All. Pilot organization on development of literacy course for BC Elsa era. Try to encourage literacy teachers to take ALL course.
Some instructors do and some don't.
I am unaware of literacy training for this level of English (CLB 5-6).

**Question 8: Do you or your program use the Literacy Language Companion with your literacy learners?**

Very little. Even this is often at much too high of a level. I wonder if the writers benchmarked it to the CLB levels for literacy learners?
I wasn't aware of a Literacy Language Companion - did a quick google search - nothing relevant came up.
Use is very limited because it is a difficult concept to grasp for the students.
It be a good investment for teachers' time to delve into the components of the Language Companion to see the benefits of using such materials and try to use them more often in class
Only a few.
It has been a challenge just getting the students to keep their Language Companions organized.
The Literacy Language Companion is very large and difficult for literacy learners, in particular lower literacy learners, to manage. Usually just print off relevant Language Companion pages to give clients.
they have a Language Companion with dividers, but no other parts of the companion at the level I teach.
Its a guide, we supplement to provide enough practice.
Some learners have the Literacy Language Companion and some have the Stage 1 Language Companion.
New students in lower levels especially. New students in higher levels (3/4) don't always come as identified literacy students, so this is why I have chosen for some aspects of classroom practice.

I have a split 1-2 LINC class. Therefore, some of my students use the Literacy Language Companion and some do not.
It's helpful.
I use the stage 1 for CLB 1-2 but revert to the literacy Language Companion for differentiation & simplicity.
Only for Foundations and CLB 1/2 classes.
This is a LINC 1-2 class but sometimes literacy learners are included.
It's difficult to use all aspects in mixed level classes with one teacher.
They are used, but currently not at my level (LA).
I have been utilizing Literacy taught techniques - however never got the above book so not sure.
It is labour intensive to do so and requires teacher interpretation and so there are varied amounts it gets used from one classroom to another...standard assessment tools for various level tasks would be more welcome and less misunderstood!
It would be great for teachers to have access to an image bank of all the images used in the Language Companions for use in teacher created digital activities such as H5Ps and SCORMs. Perhaps the image bank can be stored on a website such as tutela.ca?
For night school, the instructors do not use the Language Companions, but I do use the resources and pages in the book to teach certain themes.
I teach vocabulary (Language Companion, tabs, assessment, etc.), we do activities to learn the words ON the tabs, we take time to record (copy) assessments onto a simple inventory and we refer to the My Canada and Where I live sections when applicable.
We have the literacy language companion option on site so it can be used. the instructors usually use Avenue.ca literacy resources.
Before Covid yes (I had Language Companions on site to be used for Lit. students only), then they announced all Language Companions must be kept at home and not in class.
I supplement the Helpful English of the Literacy Language Companion with my own reference section. The Lit Language Companion is useful, but it could be much more so. I would be very keen to work on a revised Literacy Companion.
For my particular situation, no.
We used to - but we no longer have literacy learners at that level of English.
My class is a mainstream class and literacy students have transitioned to the Stage 1 Language Companion. They used the Literacy one at CLB 1.
The language companion has proven to be confusing and cumbersome for Literacy students. It's too complicated.
We also use it for LINC 1 and LINC 2.
I wish the CCLB were still printing these for us. We have to print them ourselves. They are costly for our program. There is often a delay in getting the Language Companions.
For lower-level learners, it is difficult to navigate. Would benefit from amore simplified version using colour-coding.
It's too difficult to incorporate with literacy learners, especially at the very low levels such as Foundation L and CLB1L. In addition, being online made this even more challenging.

I saw it at a conference once but our centre does not have a copy available for us.
To be honest, it can be a very time consuming activity that the students don't seem to see the point of.
Our program kept a class set of language companions at school, and since the pandemic they have not been available to learners.
My class is not a focused literacy class, so this has not been needed.
We have separate, dedicated Pre-Benchmark Levels that use these.
It is not environmentally friendly, and cumbersome.
Portfolio and some aspects of the informational sections.
It's a great tool!
We will use some parts of the language companion, mostly for introducing new vocabulary (if needed).
When we had in person classes, all learners were provided with a PBLA companion. However, since we have been online, I have distributed the companion to some but not all learners. Even when we were in person, the learners all left them at school because they claimed that they were too heavy and they never opened them at home.
I want to give it to those who need it but have not been able due to lockdown. I am setting up an appointment schedule to hand it out soon.
Every student is given a language companion and must have it in class everyday. It is very challenging for students to use it but we are mandated to use it.
We have our students keep an e-portfolio in Google Drive.
find it too difficult for my literacy learners.
I like the simplicity of the information in the literacy Language Companion, but it definitely needs updating like Stage 1 and 2.
Some teacher use the hard copy Language Companion others use the online Language Companion- since COVID and tech based learning.
Before Covid, I only used it in my class for the storage and organization of learner artifacts.
The language companion is used more in face-to-face classes, less so (if at all) in the online learning environment. I use it primarily for orientation at the start of class and to store their assessment tasks.
It's difficult when literacy learners are in a 0-4. It's nearly impossible to tend to the needs of literacy learners when the class is combined like that.
It is not user friendly for literacy.
I haven't used it since returning to the classroom after Covid and using Avenue and having an electronic Language Companion.
The Literacy Language Companion is too difficult for my Literacy students.
I think our literacy teachers do. We also have a literacy assistant who provided extra support for literacy students across levels.
We use workbooks and other materials suited to Literacy learners.
We used to when we used physical Language Companions. Not really since we started using an LMS and Google drive for eportfolios.

It isn't used very often.
We use the Literacy Language Companion in our LINC 1 classes, and some regions in our organization use it in LINC 2 classes as well.
For Foundations and CLB 1,2 the Language Companion is not very useful, just a lot of work...
We find the language too difficult for learners at any of our literacy levels (F-4L), and it's not at all user friendly. That volume of paper and print is overwhelming. Language companions are offered to students to take home but few do. The rest are stockpiled.
Not practical for a mixed-level, mostly literate class.
Literacy companion follows students to 4.
It is too high for our learners.

**Question 9: If using the Literacy Language Companion, do the learners date their Language Companion home with them every day?**

Our school has no storage space and it is much to large and cumbersome for students to bring to every class. Usually a Language Companion with the current month's/topic's notes is all that is brought and what is most useful.
The LC is large and bulky they do not like to take it home.
Language Companions are housed at school to avoid losing them.
Too big, heavy to carry on the bus.
Online learners have it at home, in-person have 2 options.
Learners typically do not want to carry the Language Companion home every day due to the size and weight.
It is too heavy to carry on a daily basis. Also, it contains their assessments, so I am afraid that if they lose it/forget to bring it back, it will disrupt the process of filing assessments.
Some students commute by bus or walk and it's difficult to take their Language Companion home everyday.
Majority of the students prefer to keep their LC Language Companions in the classroom so that they don't lose it.
The Language Companion is a daunting resource for literacy students to use on their own. With teacher support, in the classroom, it can be used.
They usually leave them in the classroom because they find them too bulky to take home.
They leave at school.
They don't understand much of the companion.
Some students travel by bus, go directly to work after class or come to class from work - it is not reasonable to expect them to carry their Language Companion around every day.
They are encouraged to take them home every day.
Currently teaching online and do not have any literacy students online at this time.
I have never heard of learners having this however maybe they do and I am not aware.
Also during Covid there have not been any given out...also they are unruly to manage in the classroom.

I also have a digital version of the Literacy Language Companion on my avenue.ca course for my learners to access as they wish. They can therefore access their language companion from anywhere. Digital literacy skills need to be integrated into Literacy language skills.
95% of our learners leave the LA in their class. Most notably, the learners who take it home are our senior citizens. They don't work or have family responsibilities and they have the time to review.
The teachers keep them in their classes at all times. We photocopy pages to send home if learners want to study at home.
We keep them at school - it's easier for the students to keep track of them.
Yes. I teach my students the importance of doing homework. Some students may not have time for much homework, but I believe the concept of practicing English outside of class time is an important part of life-long learning.
For many learners it is easier to keep in the classroom and access daily.
During the pandemic. I sense that they mostly use it to hold their ATs and SUs.
Due to COVID, students take everything home with them now.
Older learners taking the bus take their Language Companions home on the weekend'
They keep it at home. I share the relevant pages with them on screen/handouts.
We have always insisted on this and spend about an hour a week on supporting learners with the document management aspects of the Language Companion.
They are too heavy! Most of our learners walk or take the bus to school. Many pick up their children and have strollers. Learners take them home over Christmas break and at the end of June.
The students are encouraged to look at this material as a supplement to their classroom learning, but I don't ask them to bring it back and forth from home to school every day. Frankly, it's too heavy and the students have plenty of other things to carry. I've had students who have actually hurt their back and shoulders from carrying their Language Companions daily -- this is why I've told them to leave the printed Language Companion materials at home.
Since we don't provide it to our students I have no answer.
Because of the Pandemic all our classes were online, instructor encourage learners to access the Language companion online.
Mostly do not though because it is too heavy.
The Companion is too cumbersome to be taking home every day. Literacy learners certainly wouldn't be able to read any of it--it's just filled with words that they can't read.
We've been doing e-portfolios.
It's easier to keep in the classroom to keep track of. It gets lost or damaged at home.
Its too heavy and cumbersome.
Most students leave it at school as they walk to and from school and it can be heavy with other items in their backpack.
It varies from class to class, student to student. I would say most students leave the Language Companions in the classroom for use at school.

It is so difficult for them to take the Language Companions home because they have small children who destroy them or have health problems.

Students have the option to take their Language Companion home with them. The majority do not.

Many of the literacy learners in CLB 2 to 4 are online.

The Language Companions are heavy. they either keep in the class or at home.

They did not use them at home so they left them at school. Earlier, I insisted that they take them home, but then they did not bring them to school.

They will have it at home because we will continue to zoom some lessons.

We have been told that they cannot leave it in class. They carry it back and forth every day.

they leave them on a shelf in the classroom.

We are currently doing classes online and the Language Companions are in the class. Students don't have the hard copy but they have access to the soft copy on Avenue.

Literacy students need a lot of instructor support to use the Language Companions and organize the assessment tasks inside it.

Students are given the companion to take home and leave there.

The Language Companion is now electronic using Avenue. Physical Language Companions are obsolete now.

Most students are too busy at home with children to spend any time on their own learning outside of the classroom.

They take their workbooks home, but if I used the literacy Language Companion, they would leave it in class.

This has changed since we moved to online/hybrid.

Been online for 2 years and counting!

When the classes were in person, yes. Now the classes are online.

It's really heavy and inconvenient for our students who already need to bring their children to and from class.

We keep a class set in each classroom.

it's difficult to store them in some of our rooms.

Large families so learners don't want Language Companion destroyed.

**Question 10: Do you or your program make any modification to PBLA when implementing PBLA with literacy learners?**

We try our best but it takes a very long time to help them to become more independent and to help them to learn strategies using PBLA.

Reflection and Inventory sheets for higher levels only.

Lower-level clients do not use the full Language Companion. They use their own Language Companion with instructor modified PBLA dividers and trackers.

it's all very limited.

It is followed quite closely.

Modifications may be made for the Skill Using/Assessments and instructor indicates this on the assessment.
Slow paced.
Modification includes the number of assessments administered in a certain amount of time, the ratio of skill using activities to formal assessments, and goal setting and self assessments. Sometimes, it is more convenient to help students self assess their progress, orally, by interviewing them and asking them questions to help them reflect and set new goals. Also, peer assessment can cause problems between students as it could be viewed as being judged.
Certainly the artefacts learners need to include in their portfolios need to be modified. We also try to have new learners work through a PBLA readiness module to help them understand the classroom routine as we work through the PBLA process.
I assess my learners and tweak the test to what I'm testing them on.
PBLA Lead teachers guide us.
1 year of classes for literacy learners, four assessments each semester.
Students just take longer to achieve the next level but we are continuous intake and they have no time limit.
Modifications must be made to accommodate literacy and beginner learners, especially in the area of so many assessments required.
Need to be literacy appropriate. Simpler language, use pictures instead of words, etc.
I believe so - at least I personally modify the best I can under the parameters given.
Instructors need to break down and explain activities at length at the literacy level. There is a lot of preparation and extra Skill Building activities to reflect the divergent knowledge gaps in the literacy class.
We strive for less assessments on a monthly basis. We also require less reading and writing assessments. We don't do a lot of goal-setting, self-reflections, or peer assessments as it's difficult for literacy students to comprehend.
Fewer assessments and/or collection more assessments than mainstream, focus on oral skills first.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I leave out the competency language with my F and 1L students.</li> <li>• I keep track of literacy skills: 1. Letter sound knowledge in L, S, &amp; R. 2. # of high-frequency &amp; personally relevant words each student can read easily. 3. # of words each student can write from memory. 4. Oral reading: comprehension, book level, accuracy rates, self-correction rates, &amp; other oral reading behaviours such as rereading, figuring out words, substitutions on errors, &amp; how the reading sounded – natural phrasing vs. word-by-word.</li> </ul>
No, everything is on teacher.
Assessments aren't able to always be real-world, since the students are just grasping the basics at this point.
Reflective activities are simplified to really concrete examples of how change has occurred throughout a theme. Artefacts are not the only benchmark for progression within the literacy program, we have a series of checklists (largely a series of "I can..." statements) that clients need to complete beyond the 8 artefacts per skill required in the mainstream.



All literacy material has to be modified.
I'm not sure what you mean by modified. I introduced recurring visual icons to replace text in order for learners to independently indicate needs/goals/reflection/assessment.
Although our instructors have taken workshops through our ESL Literacy Project on adapting PBLA for Literacy learners, Covid and the fact that all our literacy learners are mainstreamed has made this difficult.
Our organization stresses full compliance but in practice this is quite challenging and not always effective at the lowest levels.
I do, of course, implement the most useful aspects of PBLA, that is, focus on real world tasks.
We have focused on having a +1 for the speaking/listening. For example, if a student is in Foundation L, we aim to bring them up to a CLB 1 in Speaking and listening. In addition, we don't require 8-10 assessments for students in Foundation L for their reading and writing, but instead have implemented a checklist and aim for 4-5 assessments or artefacts.
I show them the assessment sheet but only go over the criteria with those students who I feel would understand.
All three of my literacy learners have 8+ years of previous education, so they are able to work within the mainstream environment of our class.
I wasn't aware that modifications were allowed.
Modifications with pre-foundation levels
At the foundations literacy level, many aspects of PBLA are modified and more teacher directed rather than student led. Reflective activities are used but modified significantly so that learners can meaningfully complete.
I had to make some modifications to make it applicable at my class.
For the FL/Lit 1 learners the assessment feedback is altered as well as how assessments are counted. However Lit 2 to 4 are integrated in the mainstream.
PBLA requires a tremendous amount of administrative tasks, tracking, noting, observing etc., in addition to simply teaching and instructing the learners. If I were to implement all the aspects of PBLA I would get very little sleep and not have a family or social life.
Since switching to online delivery we have requested and been given permission by the CCLB to not use inventory sheets with the lower levels. We are not allowed to modify anything without requesting permission from the CCLB.
Students are given more time on writing assessments; tasks are adjusted to have more white space and fewer distracting elements.
I am using ESL for ALL which has not CLB descriptions as in CLB 2012 document that is used for mainstream classes.
We adjust our teaching methods and support for task completion.
With literacy classes, we would use a simplified Needs Assessment with lots of pictures. Also, we use mostly assessments for learning, checklists and observation records.

Literacy learners often need some degree of help to complete tasks and so task completion can either be: achieved, achieved with help, or not achieved. What type of help or support they received will usually be noted on the assessment task. A great deal of help and support is needed for literacy learners to do self-assessments, peer-assessments and/or learner reflections.

Modifications are dependent on literacy level.

I have used pictures to help with goal setting.

It can't be expected to do a weekly assessment with literacy students. You are then teaching to the test and not always providing enough time to practice real world language.

My students do not have the language skills to create their own goals. I create the sentence for their language goals and students copy.

We modify the instructions for assessments.

Since the skills are so low, assigning tasks is very limited.

I input everything into their ePortfolios for them. They do not have the digital literacy or language to use Google classroom or anything other than zoom at this stage

Foundation literacy uses more skill-using than formal assessment tasks. They also use checklists for basic skills (letter formation, numeracy, etc.) where Real World Tasks are not possible.

Far fewer assessments, more flexible as to content learned, more time given to complete the CLB level, different activities created instead of assessments that involve reading/writing for the rest of the class.

Assessment Tasks have a different look, with more visuals and more white space. We may provide oral explanation or ask questions orally rather than asking ss to read additional instructional text.

### Question 11: How successful would you say you are in implementing PBLA in your program/classes?

It is mostly a successful strategy for Stage 2+ (not low stage 1).

But challenging due to multilevel classrooms, inconsistent attendance, & online service delivery.

Module topic assessments conform to PBLA; additional assessments in practical learning skills are added - learning how to "school" is part of their real world.

It is difficult to implement PBLA successfully in classes that contain a mix of students with literacy needs and students without significant literacy needs, as those two groups of students often work at different paces. This makes doing assessments at a rate appropriate for all of the learners in the class challenging.

I was lucky to see and understand PBLA in the greater scheme of ESL literature. I think many teachers would find that beneficial.

Very successful in higher level literacy- class goals/I can statements, assessment trackers, class votes for monthly theme work.

Having the dividers for calendar & personal information is good for keeping papers organized.

It can be time consuming as learners are not yet able to complete artefact index sheets etc. independently.

I am relatively new to teaching the higher literacy levels, so I need to develop in this area.

Still being introduced to myself and then to class.
I've had to learn a lot about literacy learners to better understand how to help these students achieve success and each literacy learner is not the same as the next. It is helpful for the instructor if the CLB benchmark has an L, but this is not always the case. If the student doesn't have the L, then the instructor has to deduce and infer a lot more and place the L (if necessary). This can be difficult as some instructors do not have any training and there are limited resources at this time to help solve this knowledge gap.
Although I am unable to implement each and every aspect of PBLA as they were introduced (and that is because of the nature of literacy), I think I am very successful implementing PBLA, with some aspects modified. I believe so because I see the fruits of implementing PBLA. Assessments allow me to see what each student can/can't do. Students usually help each other completing daily activities so it is hard to know who knows what. However, assessments highlight this information for me. It also allows students to see which areas they need to work on. Speaking assessments and one-on-one interviews allow for some time to talk to students individually and listen to their needs and concerns.
I find PBLA has made my students fussing over passing the test and not the actual learning.
It takes a lot of time and effort to properly implement PBLA and the "return" for the student is very minimal. the time could be better spent on language acquisition. "Teaching to the test" becomes the focus and there is pressure to achieve a certain number of assessments rather than ensuring good understanding and mastery.
PBLA works very well with all levels except Foundations classes. To assess reading skill in a foundation class, we use only real world tasks and that doesn't work for Foundations as they struggle in reading once they move to CLB 1 class. It would be great to consider changing the type of FL reading assessments to assess more the letters, sounds and etc.
It really doesn't match the students needs or goals for literacy of any other stage.
Different levels have different challenges.
I haven't incorporated all aspects yet, but we are working on it!
I feel I am pretty successful however not sure how to measure 'self' though been told I am doing a great job by learners and staff alike.
This has been a struggle and very teacher directed. The idea of the PBLA was also for it be student-centred...this really doesn't usually happen until level 4!
It's difficult to measure success. I would say that PBLA practice has considerably slowed down progression from the literacy levels. It's difficult to attain 32 successful artefacts at the Literacy level due to the amount of skill building that is needed before moving to Skill Using and Task Assessments.
It's a challenge to authentically implement but not impossible. The students have needs that are not addressed in PBLA (especially things like developing basic skills - alphabet, using a pen, etc.) Many learners with interrupted or no formal education need time and space for the development of "learning to learn," acquiring basic literacy skills, personal confidence and the ability to transfer these skills to everyday life outside the classroom. This seems incongruous with the PBLA framework.
More success with CLB 1 than with Literacy learners.

My students generally complete 4 assessments (L, S, R & W) and a few SU tasks within 16 classes. Most students complete the assessments/tasks successfully.
With not disabled one, very successful.
I am very organized and conscientious. So, I do it. I strongly believe it should be modified... more Skill Building, less "artefacts".
Our 100% literacy classes are very successful but the classes with mixed literacy/non literacy are very difficult to teach successfully.
I was very successful implementing PLBA with my class. As a PLBA mentor, I faced a lot of pushback from other instructors who could/would not see how beneficial PBLA was with low level learners. I was very transparent with my learners and made PBLA a partnered experience between instructor/learners. As a group, we decided when it was time for skill- using, or assessment, whether the learner would be attempting assessment at that time. Taking the time to explain the goal of a task, to practice the pieces that supported successful completion of the task (taking the time as an instructor to break down those pieces into learning activities) was not well-understood by colleagues, many of whom had no literacy training.
Successful in terms of the PBLA guidelines but major hurdles for instructors and learners.
I give this answer with some hesitation because I don't do formal assessments with the students. However, since many of the activities they do are skill-using, I include these in their "portfolios".
Since there is a constant influx of students in the class, I find it very challenging. I do it because my manager asks me to but for the most part I have no support AT ALL and when I have a question I am told they don't know and since my class is a part time class we waste a lot of time just trying to get my students to understand the paperwork!
Success in implementing PBLA does not equate success in learning the language.
Difficult in the literacy class.
PBLA may not be helpful with literacy students per the study mentioned above so how could I have success with it? Furthermore "the experts indicated that PBLA was more useful a learning tool than as an objective tool..." So, no, I'm not having success using PBLA to assess benchmarks either.
Time necessary to complete a task-based learning cycle is different for regular and literacy learners, however, they are placed in the same class due to class numbers/occupancy rate. It's not ideal for teachers or learners.
We are successful but the pressure to have a certain amount of assessments covered isn't fair at that level. Putting time restraints on these learners doesn't work.
We are successful at the things we modify!
Right now, I have a mixed group of learners with various degrees of literacy needs as well as continuous intake. Since PBLA focuses on gathering assessments rather than actually learning, it makes my teaching day more difficult and stressful!
Overall successful, but there are time constraints with shorter classes in smaller centres.
Honestly, I would think without applying PBLA I would have done a better job because it is time consuming to have the students to complete the paperwork or do the reflective activities.

I've changed my expectations of what "implementing PBLA" means in the classroom. I try to incorporate reflection (when possible), I try to incorporate needs assessments (using lots of images, which can be very time consuming), I try to incorporate self-reflection orally, I try to incorporate assessments.

It depends on how the instructor applies the accommodations that we have for literacy learners in the integrated classes.

Strictly use ESL for ALL.

PBLA is nothing but giving anxiety to students and taking away the quality of teaching. We basically teach to test NOT teach to learn.

PBLA does not take into account that the literacy learners cannot read and it will take them years to do so. So they memorize the material to simply pass the assessment.

PBLA is designed for blended learning and we have been wholly online. I found the CLB 5 that I taught last year to be more PBLA compliant. Now I have CLB 2 and 1 classes that don't get even the simplified explanation of it.

We meet all PBLA criteria but this is not necessarily the best learning situation for the students.

We are expected to do 26 assessments per 14-week term which is very difficult. It's hard to find the time for students to really reflect on their learning and learn deeply before moving on to the next thing.

It depends on the Instructor- we have many excellent instructors and others that are not as successful but we keep supporting PBLA implementation and we believe very strongly in this very sound practice of English language learning delivery.

Students mostly file their assessments in the Language Companion independently. I would like to teach a PBLA lesson on a more regular basis, to update student goals, etc.

Online learning has helped to bring the real world right into our classrooms. Many everyday digital tasks can now be counted as real world tasks. For example, reading a simple text message and clicking on a hyperlink, following instructions to click on video conferencing buttons (microphone on/off, camera on/off), following simple instructions to post a picture, or signing in to an application by typing your email address and password in the correct fields.

It is hard for my literacy learners to get the full benefit of PLBLA as they are just learning to write and say the alphabet. They have had limited exposure to education and do not have a high literacy level in their own language. Understanding the PBLA is going to take a long time. We only focus on one or two aspects of it.

Literacy requires so many building blocks before real world assessments can happen. Often tests/assessments are skill building.

Students are able to do most PBLA, but I believe a lot of comprehension is lost.

Since they are in a Conversation Circle, PBLA is not required and not used formally.

There is more work for instructors when implementing PBLA with literacy learners.

for the lower levels it's difficult, for the higher levels it's doable but like I said PBLA required us to test very regularly reducing teaching time.

How is success measured? I don't think my students' successes are related to PBLA specifically.

...but integrating literacy students into a regular class is too much.

My modules are PBLA aligned but I also need to do focus on form activities to build reading and writing skills.
The reading and writing portion is not very useful for my level (1/2).
Some aspects (such as Needs Assessments or some reflections) are hard for literacy learners to grasp at lower levels.
In my CLB 1/literacy class, it's more about skill-building than formal assessment.
Quite successful with mainstream ESL students but not very successful with literacy learners.
Literacy learners do not always have the cognitive capacity to understand complex, self- reflection over learning.
At my level ss understand the purpose of assessment tasks as "tests". They have no understanding of the portfolios as they were designed to be, and no interest in taking the Language Companions home. They struggle with self-reflections.
I'm successful, but only because of major "volunteer" overtime. My class is not a literacy class though.
Teachers creatively use real world objects and resources to align with PBLA competence measurements.

**Question 12: If you are experiencing successes implementing PBLA into literacy classes/programs, could you briefly describe them?**

Needs assessment - picture choices; visual PowerPoint explanations; graph results on board. And, students are progressing. They are motivated to learn.
students understand they are responsible for their own learning but they struggle with applying that on a consistent basis. They understand the number of artefacts, they understand everyone learns at a different rate of speed. They are slowly understanding that success is not always about a mark or a grade on a test. The success is knowing they are partners in learning with their classroom teacher.
Using task-based assessment works well with literacy students - it gives them a concrete goal on which to focus.
Applying the principles of "adult learning" is one important practice because I invest in explaining the reasons for and the benefits of "needs assessment", "formative/many assessments", "self-assessment", "reflection" in a learner friendly language.
we have very small classes so that the teachers can give the literacy learners individual help.
CLB related... much scaffolding, learner friendly rubrics, real life tasks, student feedback.
Our students ae able to implement the language learned outside the classroom; they have been promoted to a higher level and have been able to get jobs.
Skills icons on handouts/tasks so clients can determine what skills are being practiced/assessed. Use I can statements for clients to determine if they can accomplish a skill/RWT.

spending time to scaffold with one small part at a time, Language Companion management is very important and tricky with my level of Literacy learners. Being very explicit with how and where to put papers in Language Companions has been successful. Cleaning out Language Companions is also important and making sure that certain papers stay in the Language Companion is important. All aspects take an incredible amount of time and diligence.

ongoing learner enrollment, positive feedback, level progress.

My learners know the terminology and can choose topics to study, complete artefact index, etc.

Having a small class (less than 10) so that the literacy learners are benefiting from more 1-1 support from the teacher as there are no TA's due to funding.

Pictures of growth, e.g. a plant as opposed to numbers and letters.

I always try to introduce the given target words/vocabulary in picture form with lots of handouts to help my learners be successful with each lesson.

Students have learned and made progress in their language training.

SS are able to assessment task on their own after lots of practice. Going slow and lot of repetition helps.

Under the theme of education we have created a module plan on aspects of PBLA for example, understanding Language Companion instructions and vocabulary, basic language to expressing settlement needs when doing a needs assessment, reading the tabs and understanding how to use the index in the content page, filling out an inventory page for assessments and the About Me section. These modules help to support the routine process of PBLA implementation and only successful when done with the whole class. the challenge is how to do the same with individual students in a continuous entry system.

Real world tasks are the things that learners need to accomplish everyday to study and work in Canada. Learners need to practice going to the doctor, shopping, asking for help;, making a n appointment and reading job advertisements.

Students take their ownership of learning English language and put a lot of efforts in and out of the classrooms. They build up their confidence that they can do something in their community/society/neighborhood.

Students are more motivated. They know their level of progress.

Students do get a grasp of being assessed in the four skill areas. L/S/R/W.

Students know where to put their assessments in their Language Companions. They can use the language learnt in class t communicate with people outside their classroom.

Students can do well on some tests as they have less a term.

Literacy learners respond positively to PBLA expectations, however, certain aspects need to be repeated many times for there to be success

Implementing PBLA with literacy learners help them to use what they learn in real world and that make them feel proud of learning the language.

Students with literacy issues are often poor at oral reading, but given time to work on their own they can understand and answer questions. Compound words intimidate them but they learn to recognize smaller words within a word and that helps.

Some success in speaking and listening, at the CLB 1-2 level.

Patience, use of images and realia, volunteers.
Slow and steady wins the race. We don't rush the students and try to help them at their pace.
Simplifying real world materials for literacy learners.
Our learners complete aspects of PBLA, however, they are somewhat modified for the learner. We do implement real world tasks, assessments, skill using and reflections. Reflections usually require guidance.
I am doing more needs assessments and reflections with the students, students understand that their language companion Language Companions tell the story of their language growth
Self-assessments tend to go well. Use pictures to indicate degree of comfort with something, students circles picture that indicates their proficiency/comfort level with the task or skill.
Learners are able to do RWTs.
Getting students to use the fill in sections with their own information to use a reference to their own Identification for example ...also just the basic concept of 4 skills we work on and trying to 'organize' some of their tests and assessments but too self-directed and very difficult online and not really very useful to the students...more useful for another teacher or program.
By using technology with my learners they have the opportunity to practice English whenever and where ever they want this in turn gives them more practice outside class to review and learn what they already have learned in the class. It helps them in turn be more successful with PBLA tasks in the classroom.
As an administrator, I like the documentation and tracking of learner progress. If there are disputes I can look at the Language Companion and understand learner progress.
I'm great with skill-building, skill-using, and assessment tasks. I do a good job of implementing real world tasks.
My students can fix problems in their real life by using what we have learned in class.
using pictures/flash cards/simplified versions.
Having access to materials (developed in-house, through other sites such as Tutela, Bow Valley), using the Skill building, Skill using and outcome assessment as a way to build confidence in learners.
because are a full time program, 25 hour/week, we have a better opportunity to implement PBLA while not neglecting skill building.
The only thing that I've observed since we started the PBLA I think is the needs assessment, we teach clients based on what they have wanted to learn.



My successes: My students generally complete 4 assessments (L, S, R & W) and a few SU tasks within 16 classes. Most students complete the assessments/tasks successfully. As far as the measurement of literacy skills goes: 1. Letter Sound Knowledge: My F & 1L students know the letter sounds in L, S & R. 2. Word Reading: F students who have been with me for at least 8 months can read up to 100 high-frequency words. 1L students who have been with me for at least 8 months can read over 200 words easily. 3. Writing from Memory: before they leave F, my students can write about 10 words from memory. 1L students can write an average of about 40 words from memory. 4. Oral Reading: F and 1L students can read appropriately leveled books with understanding, accuracy and natural phrasing. They also begin to self- correct. My students also develop the use and awareness of correct sentence structure for

the target language at their level. This awareness of what 'sounds right' helps them predict words when reading and it helps them express themselves correctly in writing.

They learn ABCs and sound letter connection and start to read and write words. They can communicate in a very basic level in different social situations.

PBLA Multi-Level Modules have been a very useful tool this year because they outline clearly what the student will learn and the activities are level appropriate. My students enjoy them. As a new teacher, these modules help me to ensure that I am following the CLB guidelines.

Using carefully designed PBLA material. I do try to adapt things that must be done in a class and turn it into an AT... such as signing in, registering a locker number, etc.

Each student has Literacy Language Companion which is use every class with entries of students work, results and improvement curve. Students appreciate having Literacy Language Companion to monitor the progress their make in each unit/skill area.

Students take ownership of their work, follow feedback and they act as resource for other students as and when needed. the understand the step by step journey of learning and success and the important of English in developing real life skills.

Despite the challenges, have successfully collected some artifacts. Students are using their portfolio Language Companions. Students can navigate the portfolio Language Companions by colours. The supplemental materials in the Language Companions are well-received by the students (print font is small).

Students can read form words and write their own names and addresses.

By making the self-reflections really concrete, it's allowed some self-reflection successes in my classes. For example, I use timed reading of new vocabulary words to allow clients to visualize their progress in reading speeds. I've started to use a "self-reflection" document that uses speeds of reading along with a question asking clients to list two words they know they did not understand at the beginning of a theme (I call it a month) that they understand now. The list is only two words, and the class is high level literacy. I'm not sure it would work in prior classes I've taught. The timed reading on the other hand I think would work in the lower levels of literacy, it's really concrete and easy for clients to see change in.

We have a dedicated Literacy Lead who also teacher LINC 1 lit and LINC Foundations. She happily and willingly shares her materials and wisdom.

Using thumbs up/thumbs down for reflection of tasks online or using similar emojis, same-same/same-no same for writing reflections comparing answer page with client's page, show papers for today's class at the start of the class and at end of class show papers again-if completed thumbs up/not completed thumbs down.
Standardizing learner paperwork into easily fillable forms (with recurring visual aids), Introducing and supporting learners' responsibility for their learning, understanding the importance and acknowledgement of help from others (and accessing it appropriately), implementing computer-based learning activities for practice, empowering learners to self- reflect/evaluate their work and to become motivated to push forward and to practice in class and outside the school, creating a template of sample tasks to replicate across themes in order to focus teaching on specific foundation-skill building...showing learners when/where/how to apply something learned to a new challenge.
Implementing reflection by using colors, pictures and expressions.
Learners are motivated to do SB and SU activities leading up to real world tasks. They are useful and practical to their every day life.
I sometimes feel that I am failing the literacy learners. I try to add extra skill-building for these students. I try to help support the instruction piece for assessments. Some of these students have erratic attendance too due to work/life stress, so they often miss important skill building and skill using activities.
Students achieve CLB 1L in reading and writing before progressing to LINC 1 or 2.
Our success is primarily a result of the intervention of our Literacy Lead and the targeted literacy training our instructors received during the ESL Literacy Project. Learners understand the purpose of the Language Companion and the importance of PBLA artefacts. Hands on, slow paced visually explicit learning with repetition and review contribute to our success. Explicit instruction using literacy techniques and strategies as well as level-appropriate material also contribute to our success.
Needs assessment (somewhat) and formative assessment.
I try to follow the PBLA guidelines as much as I can.
The use of simplified pictures to understand how they did on an assessment or in class (learner conferences, for example).
Needs assessment-students fully participate in deciding on topics, students use the LC for extra learning and understand assessment recording. Value assessments and know the importance.
Portfolios are a great way to assess; however, the literacy document by the government is not really a literacy document (font size too small and way off base).
Running needs assessment/creating lesson based on students' needs.
We have created our own database of activities and assessments for our center. We also have had the same consistent staff and protocols since we implemented PBLA. Lots of in house accountability.
Students are learning, completing artefacts and placing them in their Portfolio.

I count my successes as being able to form assessments that meet requirements for the level I'm teaching, but students who pass the assessments don't always transfer their knowledge to everyday language situations, so the success doesn't really feel like success.
Students understanding that they need to pass assessments to move up a level.
Using needs assessments, Task based skill-building/skill-using activities and assessments.
I very much appreciate using the CLB competencies as a guide to my curriculum planning.
Giving immediate feedback has been helpful for them, but counting artefacts for the Language Companions hasn't been. Students are more focused on assessments than learning the material-- isn't this what we were supposed to avoid?
I assess when I feel students are ready. Not at a time when I should be doing it according to monthly targets of PBLA.
Needs assessments, use of the literacy Language Companion when applicable, assessments at higher levels.
Needs assessments, goal setting with learning strategies, learner reflections, assessments
Students using English more in everyday life and being more confident doing so.
Learners can go over the grocery flyers and know the names of most vegetables, fruits, and prices/they can describe their sick symptoms using single words/they recognize Canadian money/vegetables.
Culminating tasks and skill-building tasks are included in the portfolios. It helps to keep students accountable, shows their progress and teaches organizational skills.
I am the PBLA Lead half time. I teach CLB 6/7 half time.
Conducting needs assessments, determining the RWT outcomes, and then backward planning the modules/lessons. Reflective activities that encourage noticing of emotional state during task, environmental distractions, readiness for the task, etc. Actionable feedback.
It is good to have regular assessments for higher levels. Students will take classes more seriously.
Modified assessment reports for FL and Lit 1 learners, and accommodation for how/which assessments are considered successful. In the integrated classes, the Literacy learners are to be accommodated when assessed.
Helps students stay organized and keep track of their progress.
Learners are able to greet and take leave of others. Many are able to provide their personal information (first and last names, address, telephone number). Many are able to describe and talk about their families (married, number of children, sons and daughters)
I log instances of task fulfilment by learners.
Three strategies for learning work for Literacy learners: clarify learning intents and criteria for success, incorporate classroom activities that elicit evidence of learning, and provide feedback that moves learners forward. Two strategies do not work yet: activate learners to become instructional resources for one another and activate learners to become owners of their learning.
Trying to use real life tasks for skill-using assignments and formal assessment.

Teachers using modules from Tutela and other sites that are working well, PBLA Lead gives excellent support, PBLA Practice Review keeps us on track and focused on an area to improve each year.
Students understand the difference between the 4 skills; they are OK with assessments and understand that those are necessary for learning; students can complete a needs assessment independently; they understand the requirements for a promotion...
I am able to integrate PBLA in my classroom with Literacy learners only. I create my assessment closer to real-world tasks.
Creating my own user friendly resources to teach "real world" skills to my learners.
All aspects of PBLA are implemented with learners in our program with a considerable amount of support from the instructors. Many resources are adapted for literacy learners by the instructors. Most real world assessment tasks are created from scratch by the instructors. With this type of support from instructors, PBLA can be implemented, and students can succeed in the program.
At higher levels, we can spend a LOT of time teaching to the task so that paper evidence is produced.
Teaching what they students choose for a needs assessment, but having said that they need everything, so it makes more sense for the teacher to choose based on knowing a bit about the daily life of the student and what they need the most. I work toward a real world assessment, but as I said previously this is not always realistic with limited skills in all four areas.
Students can reflect on their learning by circling a plant. If they feel they did well, they circle a tall plant. If they need more practice, they circle a seedling.
I have trained my students to use the Language Companion as a resource and we use it for reading practice and the students know how to keep the portfolios in good order.
Learner -centered tested to perfect assessment strategy which help them take responsibility of their progress by focusing and pursuing their language goals.
Implementing real world tasks to fulfill the required learning goal.
Real world language tasks. Role plays and conversations have always been very helpful and effective.
That I have some students who are able to learn English and would succeed regardless of how or what they are taught. PBLA itself is not the reason my students do well or learn English.
Embedded literacy skills in the modules to work on both in tandem.
We can sometimes do 'real world' assessment for things like writing a name in a form, reading days/dates from a calendar.
Students complete all the artefacts and participate actively in organizing their e-portfolio.
Needs assessment, goals, formal assessments and self-assessments.
I do the necessary assessments and file them accordingly in the Language Companions.
Aiming to cover all the competencies equally in each skill. Real-World Tasks as much as possible. Feedback to move learning forward.
Getting them to interact verbally and on equal footing with the rest of the class, improving their speaking, listening, vocabulary, and computer literacy.

I would say our Literacy students have success despite PBLA.
Demonstrating the somewhat real-world abilities of ss. Helping ss see what is required to achieve a benchmark. Giving some motivation to study for assessments.
Listening and Speaking assessments and progress are possible in my small online class, because my literacy learner has support at home and I give extra individual help. Reading & writing suffer. It's an online class, where I can't interact much with my literacy learner.
We'd need to fill pages. Maybe another day not at years end reporting time.
Good instructors. They would have to answer this question.
Level-appropriate tests.
Our literacy class teachers do their best to implement PBLA.
Online teaching, google classroom, listening and speaking assessments.

<b>Question 13: If you are experiencing success implementing PBLA into literacy classes/programs, do you have a sense of what supports have helped you achieve this success?</b>
Modifying and making my own materials. Mostly to subtly prepare students for more and more PBLA at the higher levels.
Volunteers in the classroom.
Extra help in the classroom.
Past experience as a PBLA Lead (I took time off in the middle of the pandemic and came back to a reduced class load.) Our organization has a physical library of resources and an online pooling of shared teacher made resources.
Professional Learning Sessions, Tutela webinars, Bow Valley's "A Practical Guide to Teaching ESL Literacy".
Access to the technology to allow me to create my own resources (although I sometimes find already-made resources that I can use, there's not a lot out there suitable for Pre-Benchmark PBLA work).
Understanding the underlying principles of PBLA and practicing the use of learner friendly language.
All CLB BOOKS AS GUIDANCES AND CREATING MY OWN MATERIAL FOR MY CLASSES.
Our main support is our PBLA Lead instructor. We also use the PBLA Practice Guidelines Multilevel Modules and resources, ESL For Adult Literacy, Real World Task Bank and Tutela.
Skill icons on worksheets have been super helpful in Foundation class and the older adult literacy class. These icons help learners see what skills are addressed and provides a simple way for learners to decide if they can do the skill. For example, learners can check or cross out the skill icon on a task to determine if they can or can not complete the task.
Talking with peers about what they have tried and what has worked for them. Taking a risk and trying something new just to see the outcome, is also eye opening.
Other organizations that have made versatile materials.
Having a systematic approach and my teaching organizations standardized procedures as well as spending time daily/regularly on PBLA.

communicating with other instructors who have more experience with literacy learners so that I may better understand how I can adapt/modify PBLA in my classroom to meet the needs of these students. This could be done by sharing resources, chatting, and not being afraid to ask for more information when needed. Our Lead Teachers have also helped explain, provide and guide instructors in this area.

Pictures.

Very easy to follow and structured step by step LINC lessons from various sources that help guide my students through each lesson. For example, I use ESL Library for my LINC 1-2 class that has all the PBLA requirements and outcomes for my students.

Working with and for our learners. Encouragement and Motivation are always present in my class.

ESL for All

CCLB LIT Modules and Phonics series.

My manager understands our challenges teachers of literacy.

Having additional reading and writing synchronous online reading class. This is not tied to the tasks they do in class for PBLA but has proven to be supportive as the reading material is graded and introduces both phonics and sight words to the reading material in small incremental steps. Work is also done to build reading skills and patterns as well as including skill building writing to help learners use their reading to build their writing/typing. This consistent weekly reading/writing time has been well attended because learners are put into small groups according to level of ability and although the time is short (30-45 mins) it is consistent enough to for learners to make progress. We have used volunteers who have had teaching experience with literacy learners to carry out this extra support.

The PBLA has helped in managing the classroom...attendance...assessments'. It provided opportunities to me to collaborate and plan for lessons...it encouraged me to share material among other teachers...Implementing PBLA to classrooms has helped me offering workshop to classroom and helped me finding the goal and roles of teachers and students in classrooms.

No support at all. It has been very difficult because I need to prepare the assessments then rubric.

Management team and PBLA Lead teachers often provide opportunity of PD sessions. We, teachers get updated and refreshed in the regular basis. We do share our experiences, challenges, and solutions between/among co-workers with those who teach the same level. The cap number of the students in each literacy classes is appropriate (10 students per class).

Competencies of CLB.

Lead teacher support. Learning from others implementing it. Ready made assessment materials rather than creating my own assessments.

Time, consistency and repetition are necessary for success.

Using simple language to introduce it to the students for the criteria. Using more pictures and that helps a lot and make PBLA works for them.

Do an exercise together and then do another similar one on their own. Check that they understood instructions. one on one tutoring is great where available.

My coordinator at the center.

Volunteers, a teacher who is passionate about teaching literacy, teaching materials.
CALL, sometimes having an assistant/volunteer in the class.
Flexibility from the employer.
Some are: repetitive tasks, assessments completed verbally at times or narrowing down the task.
An excellent ESL team lead who is very knowledgeable in PBLA and approachable, and regular PBLA trainings within our organization.
Staff training sessions and discussions.
Volunteers who are able to sit with students one on one. Not all volunteers are suitable for this kind of work, but sometimes it is helpful.
I ensure learners understand any basics/fill in gaps e.g. I had a learner who did not know how to print (was informed by staff that this learner was having ongoing difficulties). How can we expect RWT to be done such as writing a greeting card or their personal info when it is not PBLA to teach how to print letters ... or that was what I was told. I did it anyways by including it in my lessons and 1:1s with any basics students struggled with so they could be successful. Learners and families appreciated this, and also got positive feedback from work... saying how did you do that? Wow this learner can now It is really important in my opinion to make sure learners have ALL the basics they need to succeed or else we are setting them up for failure. Most severe case was a student in which prior to me was in Literacy for 12 yrs (that is what I was told) and after a couple months with me getting the basics integrated for success, was overjoyed that finally they could write their name, address, and so on perfectly. I believe we need to listen, be aware, and equip learners for success even if it is not PBLA per se. One can't run, if they don't even know how to walk yet. Thank you.
Time!!!!
The ability to use technology and avenue.ca with my learners has helped me achieve success in implementing PBLA into my class with literacy learners. Moodle programs such as SCORMs, H5Ps, and ReadAloud has helped my learners practice their listening, reading and writing as well as with pronunciation and reading especially when using the ReadAloud with vocabulary words and Sentences learned in class.
PBLA Lead with literacy training has been very helpful to guide other literacy instructors.
Working with my colleagues to find solutions. ESL for ALL document.
observation of literacy class and support from my team.
PBLA Leads in the program have helped a great deal, networking opportunities and resource sharing ideas with other literacy teachers, the opportunity to have PD workshops about tracking sheets, collecting artifacts, using the Real World Task Bank, multi level classes and much more.
CLB ESL for All Support Kit, PBLA Practical Guidelines, other sites specifically developed for Literacy learners, our organization has currently one paid employee who provides direct support to the highest need students, we use volunteers and our Team Lead and the team of literacy teachers collaborates regularly.
Full time classes give enough face to face time to build, practice and use tasks. We have a Literacy Support Staff who can do tutoring with literacy learners if they struggle in a task

- The opportunity to join a cohort of Burnaby School District elementary-school teachers in a 2-year literacy instruction training program.
- Ongoing paid Pro D time.
- Ongoing PBLA refresher Pro D.
- Paid collaboration time (4 hours/month)
- Knowledgeable and helpful PBLA Leads.
- A Literacy Lead position.
- Sets of adult literacy readers (some free and some purchased).

School's support of course to provide good literacy resources.

ESL for ALL, LINC Curriculum Guidelines and PBLA multi-level modules - 1L/2L. When creating my own modules, tasks and assessments, I rely heavily on the PBLA multi-level modules to guide me.

Following a consistent pattern and routine, involving students in their learning using various strategies, tools and techniques in how much is learnt and can be implemented in real life situations.

Our literacy instructors have found the following supports helpful: the online self-directed course: An Orientation to the CLB: ESL for ALL (CCLB) and accompanying resource materials, on-going support from the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO), the online course: Teaching EAL Literacy Learners (TELLS) offered by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), Tutela repository, as well as, in-house support from colleagues and literacy team.

My previous experience with literacy learners.

Inter-instructor conversations are probably the majority of where I've received "supports" that have led to these successes. To a lesser extent, it is also just time teaching literacy clients; without experience teaching literacy clients I don't think I would have been able to understand the instructor conversations in order to apply them to my classes.

Literacy Lead. In house lit pro-d.

Trial and error of self created materials. Discussing/sharing ideas with other literacy teachers during PBLA sessions.

Acknowledge that learners come to the class with other strengths that can help them acquire literacy skills, a willingness to explore, experiment and slow things down, CCLB online discussion portals, tutela shared material (new ideas).

Real World Tasks Ottawa Board, Tutela resources and webinars.

Our literacy lead teacher helps me with ideas, materials and additional skill-building geared towards literacy learners.

ALL Document from CCLB, LPT.

An instructor who was experienced with literacy prior to the implementation of PBLA

The position of the dedicated ESL Literacy Lead is the single greatest contribution to our success. In addition, the explicate ESL Literacy training our instructors received during the ESL Literacy Project increased their abilities and skill sets in ESL Literacy instructional contexts.

Appropriate-level resources.

Language companion CLB ESL for all Support Kit For Adult Literacy learners.

PBLA Leads and the growing community of Literacy teachers across Canada.

Making it Real-Literacy council of Minnesota, ESL FOR ALL AND SUPPORT KIT. REAL world tasks. Tutela resources shared by other teachers



My peers and I have created many supports no thanks to the govt.
Good resources.
My PBLA Training.
Support from Lead Teacher, Program Coordinator, ECSD training and planning process.
My PBLA Lead Teacher.
PBLA Leads, the benchmarks books and the supports they list (more time, pictures, larger font, etc.)
CLB and CLB for ALL textbooks.
Other teachers showing me the ropes.
My own hard work and dedication.
Strong literacy team of dedicated teachers and PD support.
Pre-packaged sets for students; support from the admin/management team; intake interviews.
drawing/acting/ESL videos/ESL online webs./recording my voice and posted in What's Up so they can listen to the new words as much as they can.
Tutela, CLB's for Literacy, CLB support book, webinars and workshops, colleagues help and collaboration.
ESL for All, Webinar: Modifying for the Literacy Learner.
Our program does not have any PBLA Leads with release time from teaching to support other instructors. This makes it challenging to get feedback on tasks and receive support.
I have applied PBLA as much as I could in my classes mostly based on trial and error. Some aspects may work in some classes and sometimes it doesn't work at all.
Time effort to prepare materials for students with large fonts and many images.
Workshops I have attended at TESL Ontario, webinars on Tutela, resources from Bow Valley College and the Immigrant Centre in Halifax, my own experience instructing Foundation Literacy and Lit 1.
Consistency and encouragement from teachers.
Our PBLA Lead.
Websites such as learning chocolate, ESL Library, ABCENG.org, Tutela webinars, YouTube and the internet in general.
Having an Educational Assistant (EA) or volunteer to support the literacy learner.
Setsu and my Lead T: Uzma and my LINC co-ordinator: Paulette.
Five PBLA components work: needs assessment, goal setting, CLB levels, portfolio skills inventory sheets, learning tasks artefacts. Two PBLA components are premature for Literacy learners: learning reflections and assessment task artefacts.
SELF AND REAL LIVE ASSESSMENTS.
ESL for All
Collaborating with my colleagues. We hold weekly level meetings and share resources, ideas, and assessments.
Literacy Centre of Expertise (TIES)

Strong PBLA Lead; regular shorter PD sessions throughout the year on PBLA; NOTE: we would like to provide another one hour per week per class of PBLA time as allowed by our funder but our Administration Team has not allowed this. We have no other prep time in our contract agreement. This is preventing greater success of PBLA delivery.
We have a PBLA Lead who provides a lot of supports to teachers.
An extra teacher or aid.
PBLA Lead, ESL for ALL, CLB book, CLB Literacy Language Companion.
I am successful at implementing PBLA; however, there are no supports that have helped me. I create every thing myself.
ESL for ALL, ESL for ALL Support Kit, Literacy Continuum, Real World Assessment Task Bank, Ventures Basic, Learning for Life (old ESL books), Learning Chocolate, You Tube, Reading Bear, Starfall, Halifax Centre for Immigrants Readers, Bow Valley, many resources adapted and/or created from scratch for literacy learners by the instructor (i.e.: loads of unpaid work).
Other instructors that have created level appropriate materials. The Joy of ESL website and Conestoga College have Literacy assessment rubrics that are essential for my PBLA implementation.
My willingness to work many extra hours to adapt PBLA to literacy learners.
Keeping abreast with all the current PBLA updates through the support from the PBLA Lead, manager and Tutela.
Having volunteers help with reading and writing i.e. Yazidi cohort.
Are use the language companion to create lesson plans as well as creating skill building and skill using tasks and most importantly it's help me with creating my own real world assessments.
Online resources, other teachers.
My constant reading on how to develop implementing PBLA to meet my learners needs. in class.
ESL or all, interactive activities from Literacy Centre of Expertise at TIES.
PBLA training by our PBLA Leads and experience with teaching traditional LINC PBLA
Management team's support.
Guidelines.
Good training, resources, materials. Classes that are exclusively literacy and often only one level.
I am a PBLA Lead teacher, I have worked with literacy students in specified literacy classes as well as in regular LINC classes. Being a large organization that delivers services in several regions of Greater Vancouver, we have a group of PBLA Lead teachers who support each other.
volunteers, translators, computer literacy specialist.
modifications
The literacy teacher's support group that I initiated during remote learning due to Covid.
Volunteer & supportive family to help student understand her assignments (online)
Internal. Few if any from AMSSA or BCTEAL.
Literacy handbook as well as the CLB 2012 document. Also, the modules shared on Avenue.ca as well as through the other CCLB sharing.
Resources from TUTELA and CCLB.

**Question 14: What are the challenges of implementing PBLA with literacy learners in your program/classes?**

PBLA documents contain a level of language beyond the ability of the students. PBLA is too abstract for new learners – it takes months or years to develop the learning skills for PBLA to be considered useful.

But challenging due to multilevel classrooms & inconsistent attendance & inconsistent volunteer support.

Making sure I'm testing the skill I'm trying to test. Listening assessments must be quite visual instead of relying on students ability to select a response based on reading.

Communicating with students.

Goal setting, fear of assessments, resistance to independent learning, trouble understanding concepts related to PBLA such as needs assessment, self-reflection, using feedback to inform learning.

Some of the challenges are: lack of suitable resources for my level; sometimes having to do assessments with the class at a faster pace than is appropriate for the literacy students, so that students who are NOT literacy students can accumulate enough assessments to move up before they become frustrated or demotivated.

the learners being able to keep things organized and find the right places to put the materials. It is also hard to give the learners enough time for skill-building activities and provide the appropriate help necessary for the assessment tasks while the rest of the class is completing the task.

Time, repetition, repeating assessments and staying on target with the number of assessments that are required for the PBLA per term.

It's harder for literacy learned to understand self-reflective activities and needs assessments, so we have had to modify/simplify them to make them easier for literacy learners.

Time consuming at the lower levels as I have had to organize the Language Companions. Challenge for students to organize papers within their proper tabs.

Language Companion management- PBLA uses a lot of checklists and client reflections. Assessment management- clients often throw out failed tests rather than keep them for their portfolio. Learner ownership/engagement- often clients say they want to learn everything.

This makes needs assessments/goal setting challenging.

Trying to customize and simplify what is already there in PBLA (for mainstream). Using appropriate and comprehensive images to help the Literacy learners understand ideas and concepts.

More real-world material for the lower end literacy learners.

PBLA is a complicated system with difficult language to explain to lower-level literacy learners.

Finding time to create task-based assessments, having students understand purpose of showing them their progress and not receiving a mark.

Timing - reading and writing activities take more time and often students need support or guidance to complete the activity. Extra explanations, demonstrations are needed. Student often needs the instructor to work 1-1 to help get him/her going and student often asks questions (which can be bothersome for other non-literacy learners as they are done the activity quicker). Students may perceive the literacy learners as getting more help and therefore, non-literacy students are not receiving equal/fair treatment. It takes more time out of your class to work with these students, and some students are left waiting or feeling bored (in larger classes, this will not work).

Understanding purpose of PBLA, understanding directions.

My challenges are when I have a split LINC 1-2 class and some students are pre-lit and cannot read the material versus the other students who can read the material. My higher level students feel that they lower level students are hampering the lessons.

The fact that the majority have never been to school. Work side by side with them, and definitely, the patience factor which is the key to success when teaching/training adult learners.

Collection number of artifacts in certain period of time.

Students cannot fully take responsibility for their own learning.

The online component, Avenue, ...

There are not enough ready-made materials created for literacy learners. Teachers need to create additional materials to support learners in PBLA which is not compensated especially when teachers need to also make time to create suitable activities on Avenue. Literacy learners want to be digitally competent but usually they are more familiar with using a phone rather than a computer. Creating materials on H5P which has oral and visual supports is VERY time consuming. The only ready-made material I have used for low level literacy students which have been successful for literacy learners have been the Literacy Centre of Expertise modules and the literacy module on housing created by CCLB. Learners have used these with success and new teachers have learned how to implement PBLA with literacy learners by using these ready-made materials with examples of suitable visuals, fonts, texts etc.

Making them understand competencies.

Some learners are not ready to be assessed but the pressure to give them an assessment just sets them to failing the tests!

Too many students for 1 teacher, the level is too low, not enough time, not trained.

skill building takes longer. There's a mix of PFL, FL, pre-CLB, levels 1, 2 and 5. It is difficult to teach a task-oriented lesson to a multi-level class with learners who can't identify English letters. Same with real world assessments.

Number of tests- 32.

I don't see the benefit for the low-level literacy students. It feels like "more red tape" to get through and it needs a lot of time and effort by the teacher to try to convey PBLA to the lowest level literacy students.

Lack of PBLA assessment samples in Tutela and Real-World Tasks. The difficulty of implementing some competencies in a literacy context.

Goal setting is not designed with learners of trauma in mind. Test taking is stressful and every way we structure assessments are not taking into account a trauma-based approach.

Literacy learners that are in mainstream classes do not receive the time and repetition they require for success. It is difficult when they compare their learning to non-literacy learners.

The challenge with Foundations classes with the assessment tasks in reading and writing. It is also hard for this level to identify the learners needs and goals.

Language is too much and too high for learners. Formalize assessments are too stressful and confusion for many learners. Language Companions are a big waste of paper and government money. Students spend too much time filling in paperwork. PBLA is not reflective of real-world tasks and does not follow CLB guidelines.

Literacy students don't finish on time and if they take it home to finish, they may be getting extra help with homework. They get frustrated seeing others succeed much more easily. Their portfolio has several artefacts that they did not pass as well as those they did. If I don't mark and return their failures, they may think I am the reason they are not advancing. Other students get impatient with slower readers and want to correct them, but I stop them from doing that. Literacy issues affect the student's ability to pass a listening test if you have to read multiple choice questions.

Assessment and resources.

Students cannot learn the required vocabulary to understand PBLA and the large number of assessments. They can understand and use only a very limited number of new ideas, themes and vocabulary.

The length of time to prepare students for an assessment is much longer than for mainstream students. programs should be given the permission to focus on basic fundamentals before implementing PBLA--the added pressure, and lack of training, add stress to both the teacher and the student.

Lack of literacy in first language, trauma, loss of memory, lack of digital skills, mental health issues, stress.

The expectations for collecting artefacts, having no dedicated literacy class, larger class sizes (20+) in a multilevel class.

Needs assessment: students don't have enough knowledge to decide for themselves; goal setting: students who are not literate cannot understand the concept in a foreign language; reflection: can be done only orally; RWT: for foundation level learners identification of alphabet should be a real world task.

the complexity of the concept for a person struggling with the language.

PBLA can be more on the academic side. Some learners have trouble reflecting upon what the learned or how it relates to real world. Some tasks can take a lot of guidance to complete. When tasks needs several alterations in order to be given to a learner, it is very time consuming. Creating assessments that are accessible for literacy learners.

Requires a lot of scaffolding and repetition to get to a level of comfort/understanding, but that is the usual. :)

Integrating students who can read and write with students who can not complete any exercises or read any instructions. There is no time for me to sit one on one with a student help them work on a reading. Also, I'm trained to help literacy students.

Student not having the basics to be able to complete tasks as described above. Online learning challenges as described in another question.
As noted above...for the most part time consuming and too teacher dependent.
-Literacy learners need more time to learn and use PBLA than mainstream learners. Lack of resources for Literacy students is another challenge. Lack of Literacy level specific I can do statements and examples can make implementing PBLA with literacy challenging. CCLB should come up with a path of I can do statements specifically for FL, 1L and 2L learners to use and to simplify this for teachers.
Learners don't understand PBLA as a theoretical framework. They need a lot of practice to understand why the instructor does SU and task assessments. Difficulty understanding the value of self reflection, peer feedback. Express frustration with PBLA. As an administrator, I explain PBLA to family members who assist learner at home.
Literacy learners taking control of their learning. They don't grasp the concept of setting goals or needs assessments. They see assessments as tests to pass, not as a formative process to undergo.
Need to know more skills and strategies to teach literacy.
For a two night per week class and online for the last two years, it has been hard to see much progress. It takes more time to get them to the point of being ready to be successful in assessment tasks. I am happy that we are also able to use observation records and skill using activities as artifacts. That helps a great deal!
Vocabulary/themes when a lot of time is on alphabet/numeracy.
The primary problem is lack of good prepared resources and the time it takes to create/adapt existing resources, inconsistent understanding about adult ESL learners developing literacy skills (i.e. - oral skills must come first to open the door for reading/writing).
Resources, PBLA feedback is usually written and giving oral feedback consumes too much class time b/c language of PBLA is not student-centred, it takes longer for literacy learners to see success, digital skills and blended learning are barriers.
When Lit. students are in the same class as regular ESL.
Stress because literacy learners face huge barriers and depend on family support. Often these types of learners do not have elementary school so are not familiar with testing procedures. Also, feedback does not improve their learning and self-reflection is a concept that is confusing for them.
Literacy students do not have the language skills required for teacher to communicate/teach metacognitive strategies needed form PBLA. Most literate students come into the class with limited or no English skills, but that already have metacognitive and literacy skills that allow them to participate in PBLA.
Hard to explain the goals and steps to students.
Students don't have the critical thinking skills to complete many of the tasks. They don't have content knowledge to express their needs - they don't know what they don't know. They don't have the learning skills or habits of mind.

When assessing this level, I require clear/simple criteria to determine the students' basic skills based on the 4 competencies (similar to the main CLB Guide). For example, can a student decode words or read numbers? This is not included in the 12 LINC themes.
You cannot focus on what needs to develop to help students go beyond oral language. It should be 50% minimum reading, 25% writing... all listening and speaking - the most basic and what needs to be introduced initially to support literacy.
Finding/modifying mainstream tasks/assessments to be appropriate for CLB 1L, CLB 2L students in a mainstream class. Most of the time I give them the regular assessments.
Time consuming.
Language challenge, the need support of pictures and the use of translator if and when needed.
Creating assessments that are both real-world, and level appropriate, and are across all competencies. It's extremely difficult and time-consuming.
Asking students to record the information onto the inventory sheets is often more challenging than doing the skill using and assessment tasks. It is difficult to implement PBLA in split level literacy classes. Creating the assessment themselves is time-consuming. Collecting assessments across all competency areas is challenging because developing real-life tasks that at literacy appropriate is difficult.
Low confidence in learners, little skill in reflective thinking.
Needs assessments are now not feasible because we are using "homework packages" that are shared throughout all the classes of the same level. In order to do a needs assessment we have to scaffold the next month's theme and ask the needs assessment type questions a good 1-2 months ahead of the next theme. There's not enough time to plan this far ahead for many instructors. The self-reflection is difficult for many clients in literacy due to a combination of lack of understanding of what the purpose of self-reflection is along with a lot of clients with low levels of agency. Teaching choice is difficult for some (maybe many) clients and affects both aspects.
Most of the materials are not written for literacy in mind.
Clients' understanding of what PBLA is and why we use it is non-existent. It is part of the class routine. Learn-practice-do work- check work- thumbs up/thumbs down.
Breaking PBLA abstract concepts (very Western) down into component parts that can be 'taught'.
Time constraints - it takes a long time to complete SB activities, so actual assessment tasks done/completed are few, peer assessments and self-assessments are difficult to do with very low levels.
Poor attendance, these students often need 1:1 additional support. Since there are at least 8 of 16 in my class, I am stretched too thin to be of help. My other students can work at a certain pace, so even when I differentiate my teaching, it is complex and difficult trying to meet the needs of all of the students.
We have used translators to provide orientation, but if learners join later, it isn't always possible to provide them with an in-depth orientation.

The biggest challenge for PFL & FL learners is that there is no correlation with the CLBs. The ESL for ALL is a stand alone document that doesn't address the CLBs. There is no correlation between the CLBs and PFL and FL. What are the CLB expectations for PFL learners looking to move to an FL or beyond. The Literacy designations are not addressed in the CLB 2012.

Explanations and setting up assessments.

The concepts (reflection, goal-setting etc.) are abstract and require levels of language eclipsing the learner's levels.

The fact is that everything the students do in the classroom tells me where they are "at" in their learning. Formal assessments are not only unnecessary but time-consuming and stressful for everyone in a way that doesn't contribute to the bigger picture of teaching/learning at this level. Likewise for "goal setting" and "reflection" activities.

I have a Hybrid class at the moment and sometimes it is difficult to handle assessments for online students and in person students.

First, they are unable to understand the importance of PBLA Language Companions, they are unable to do self-reflection or needs assessment as they have yet to develop student habits. Most of these learners believe being a student means listening to the teacher and all the knowledge will just come naturally. I think there needs to be a focus on giving them the language to integrate and teaching them how good study habits and skills.

I disagree with my schools required # of artefacts. 8-10 AT. That is too many for literacy. They are basically repeating similar tasks with little difference. I feel confident that 5-6 assessment tasks would prove their ability.

- No support from the management team at all. I am just doing what I feel is right.
- Not enough resources available online so I do things the way I feel are right.
- We are coerced to use Avenue with our students but there are no resources for that either and my students find the amount of text on it extremely challenging.
- The management themselves do not know that literacy requires assessments in only reading and writing and I have to submit assessments for all 4 skills.
- The PBLA Lead that we have has no clue about literacy and most of her advice is not relevant.
- The students who are truly literacy students have gone through a lot of trauma and we are trying to get them to learn a lot of skills at once like organization and cognition and hand eye coordination! It is a lot for them to learn in a 2 hour class! And quite honestly, it is exhausting for me as a teacher! On a daily basis, we have personal issues cropping up that require my attention and I find the filing of artefacts quite challenging!
- When our students move up o a higher level, those teachers have no clue that these students are supposed to be 1L and the expectation is that the literacy teacher ensures they are sent to a higher level ready to tackle an advanced level 0-1 class.
- There is a HUGE gap in what a Literacy level students needs to be promoted to a level zero class and what is actually taught at a level 0-1 class and most students end up dropping out because of the stress!

The government is missing the point of literacy much of the time; these students need repeated



exposure to the same materials. They don't need teach, test, teach test.
The challenge is goal setting with literacy learners/self-reflection is very challenging too.
The students inability to keep their materials organized and lack of prior structured learning is difficult for the students.
It takes longer to complete some competencies but the allotted time is the same as regular CLB.
Students now focus on the number of assessments they need to pass a level, even when we emphasize that that's not the point.
The extra time needed with no support in the class.
Students don't have any idea about goal setting or thinking metacognitively at Foundation and 1L.
Anything paper-based (reading/writing) Literacy Ss find difficult to understand, Using/ understanding importance of PBLA (Language Companion), document organization, confusion with goal setting/reflection, Ss have challenges understanding rubrics, some PBLA terminology difficult for literacy Ss.
They find it very difficult to do needs assessment and reflection. Their listening and speaking are supposed to be comparable to CLB but in fact, they are not.
Mixed level classes with mixed needs.
Real-World Tasks are hard to achieve when we're so worried about counting artefacts as opposed to actually building skills. We're going overboard with assessing criteria rather than giving learners time to process the information and build their skills. Too much emphasis has been placed on summative artefacts for the Language Companion rather than actual learning on the students' part. I thought the point of PBLA was to distance ourselves from so much assessment and the opposite has happened. We've stepped on the gas and are shoving all this testing down their throats--for what?
Learner autonomy required to complete PBLAs needs to be learned and it takes time.
The students may not be ready for an assessment when the target date is expected. They may still be learning, so to have an assessment just to meet a certain amount of assessments per week or month isn't fair.
Timing. Literacy learners need much longer timelines. Also, the lowest levels of literacy don't need the formality/strict structure of PBLA. I find the PBLA obsession with assessments/tests out of place in a literacy classroom. At the higher levels, the whole principle behind "having them look back and see how far they have come" to be irrelevant. They don't care, honestly. Once they move up a level, all the assessments get tossed in the trash.
PBLA focuses on assessment gathering rather than language learning and in the age of digital technology we are still using large plastic Language Companions to file printed assessments. There is a lot of research out there to support the inadequacy of PBLA-Yuliya Destoyova did some years ago. ( <a href="https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1273130.pdf">https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1273130.pdf</a> ) Why is CLB only putting out surveys in NL now- 2022!
The Language Companions are cumbersome and not useful for all literacy levels. Orienting new learners to PBLA is time consuming and often put on the management team.

Most students in our literacy class are elderly and only want to socialize. They don't care about assessments and don't see the point in doing them. A Seniors Conversation Circle or something similar would be more suited for them.

Whenever a learner is absent for a couple of days it is very hard to catch up with the class/lack of interaction with native people/cultural shock/health issues.

Government timeline expectations of 8-10 artifacts in one semester.

Jargon used in PBLA, concept of self-assessment are hard for many learners to grasp.

The Language Companions (physical and e-portfolios) are extremely time consuming for the teacher. This is the biggest challenge.

Lack of language and skills makes communication very difficult. It is extremely time consuming to explain things to each student one by one and it wastes our teaching time on doing the paperwork.

The lack of resources and supportive community. I often feel weighed down by the amount of time spent on creating materials and resources for 3-hour classes in addition to planning the lesson and preparing the materials before class. On top of that, creating all of the self- assessments, needs assessments, task sheets for assessments, designing rubrics. I often feel overwhelmed. I have been directed to use "Tutela" and "Ellii" and I have found some Modules for the F-CLB 2L levels online, but I don't feel they are substantial enough to provide teachers with the amount of work expected of the PBLA.

The biggest challenge is that Foundation Literacy and Lit 1 learners progress much more slowly than the CLB learners. For the FL and Lit 1 learners, success is completing a task independently in an environment where it is always very supportive of learning. For those in Lit 2 to 4, their acquisition of reading and writing skills tend to improve more slowly that their L and S skills so that can result in an increasingly jagged profile.

The class is a mix of students with different strengths and very little or no knowledge of letters and numbers. Implementing PBLA is difficult as there are no set Profile of Ability to look back to.

Lack of literacy and prior education- no reference point for having a Language Companion, foundational knowledge of what progress is and supposed to look like.

Not basic enough, too high, Language Companion way too cluttered, print too small, not enough white space.

PBLA is nothing but giving anxiety to students and taking away the quality of teaching. We basically teach to test NOT teach to learn. I do implement PBLA as it is required, but I assess my students on every day tasks they do, on daily performance they do NOT one nonsense paper they answer.

Having to do assessments regularly but the learners take a very long time to learn even the simplest things. Learners are not able to use the student companion properly to file away assessments etc., so I have to do it for the vast majority of them. I have to make a lot of my resources myself which is very time consuming. We are required to teach learners to perform real-world tasks, but many absolute beginners are unable to function. It may take them more than a year to even learn all the letters of the alphabet. The biggest challenge with literacy learners is that they do not know how to learn and cannot identify what they want or need to learn. Even in doing need assessment and they are asked to choose what they want to learn next, they often ask me to choose as they say that they do not know.

The need for one-on-one help for learners in a multilevel class is a must. If resources are not available, then the program is not effective. In a multilevel class (Stage 1 or a combination of Stage I and II), even conducting group activities involving all learners is very difficult.

Learners can join a zoom, answer questions, write a dictation, and other basic tasks. Tasks will increase in complexity when we work in-person. There are a lot of things that I could show them in a computer lab that they cannot do on their phone at home.

Literacy learners have still to develop the language, skill, and confidence for meaningful self-assessment.

Portfolio maintenance and upkeep.

Not enough time to do skills building. I feel students are moving to the next level without a firm grounding and enough exposure to the language, e.g., vocabulary is limited to a particular theme.

Lack of formal education for most of my students, a lot of pressure about giving them the required number of assessments in one semester. They usually need more time to skill build a lot of things before they can be assessed. No phonics approach is included in PBLA.

Integrating self-assessment and peer assessment. For literacy learners of CLB 1 or below, it is difficult to conceptualize self-reflection in English.

The teacher ends up doing most of the work for the students.

Pinpointing real world tasks for formal assessments and students filling out the assessment inventory for their LC Language Companion.

Lack of ready-made modules on Tutela. Modules are focused on CLB 1-6. Need regular updates on new modules available. Keep investing in developing multi-level modules.

It is very hard to get the students to understand goals. It is challenging to have the students put assessments in the Language Companions.

Assessments are generally stressful for students; they usually need to be generated by the instructor; it takes a long time to teach to an assessment.

Giving the Literacy students the time they need in a multilevel class. Having enough preparation time to modify activities adequately for literacy students.

There isn't enough documented support for teachers to look into when creating assessments and modules for literacy learners.

The need to create all of my own resources.

Lack of available real world task resources targeted to adults with literacy needs leads to the instructors doing a lot of unpaid work to create resources from scratch. Also, it takes a long time for literacy learners to learn the skill-building needed to do real world tasks (i.e.: learning how to read/count/use technology, etc.), so progress is slower for literacy students than for regular students. Sometimes there is a great deal of learning that must happen before they can do a single simple task.

Classes have too many levels in them, especially 0-4. There should be dedicated Literacy classes in order to fully help literacy learners. PBLA with literacy learners is not practical.

Paper production is not meaningful to literacy learners; a real world task rarely is a print-based task for literacy; expectations are too academically based; expectations to 'copy' are discouraged, but in fact, are real-world for literacy; PBLA asks for a snapshot - literacy learners need a video.

It is hard to explain new concepts such as setting goals and self-assessment tasks.

Mentioned above: Students don't know what they need at this level, so a needs assessment is not very useful. They always choose Canada, which is great, but being able to buy groceries or go to the drug store is more important at this point. The Language Companion language is way too hard for literacy. It is meant for much higher-level learners. There are hardly any appropriate resources to use. Teaching toward a weekly test is often not realistic and then the focus becomes this instead of being able to teach to the moment, which arises from the materials in the lesson.

There are very few resources for Literacy level appropriate materials. I must create most PBLA material.

Getting students to read instructions on assessments and comprehend them. Keeping literacy students at the same pace as others in an often chaotic online zoom class with screaming kids and family members. I find the onus of maintaining students' portfolios is more on the teacher now with online teaching.

Literacy students do not always understand the concepts of PBLA or the reason for doing things and are not always able to organize themselves and their papers and Language Companions.

PBLA is not applicable for Literacy learners.

Workload, there is so much more instructors need to do for their learners.

Students that are illiterate in literacy and numeracy skills in their own language and also illiterate in numeracy skills.

Real world tasks at low levels are limited as there is nothing to really test. it's a clean slate that needs to be filled first and that takes time.

We are online, many students struggle with technology.

Learning reflection is challenging for literacy learners to do on their own. Completing and posting learning reflections where learners copy and add them to their portfolios.

Continuous intake, having to implement blended learning.

PBLA doesn't work for everyone. I feel like I teach to the test and I don't really teach in a meaningful way that really helps people learn English. I barely teach grammar. I don't always teach topics that apply to all students. Needing a certain number of assessments in order to progress up is not helpful for all students. Some of my students are Literacy learners on paper but don't need the extra support because they have strengthened their skills.

Trying to teach regular and literacy in the same room.

32 assessments for each student in 6 months is too many assessments. I'm so focused on teaching to the task that I struggle to also have time for focus on form and building foundational literacy skills. Students cannot use Google classroom with lack of digital literacy so all input of assessments falls to me in my personal time.

The 'real world' side of tasks. When they are learning ABCs, it's difficult for them to perform any tasks that would be real-world applicable. Sometimes I need to assess on basics, like sight words or letter identification, just to bring them up to the point of completing real world tasks.

Completing the inventories, students need a lot support.

Reading (many can only read at a beginning level and reading lengthy vocab words doesn't make sense to expect) and writing (literacy students struggle so much that many can't complete a full PBLA real world task without a lot of support). Many of my learners would never learn to read and write, seeing as it's proven that a systematic phonics program is the best way to teach reading and writing and the PBLA has nothing to do with any decoding skills.

The pace needs to be slower, so students can take a long time to complete a portfolio. Some aspects are quite abstract and difficult to explain to lower levels - needs assessments, goal- setting, self-assessments.

Students understanding that they don't have to be perfect, the concept of progressing through a process as opposed to "passing" a test, organizing PBLA Language Companions mostly falls on the teacher, students not understanding "reflection", that it's about them, not the teacher. (My students will always say everything is good, because they believe if they say otherwise, that means the teacher is bad!)

Formal assessments, theme-based learning with actual real-world tasks with regards to R/W as opposed to just basic skills out of context.

Usually in my LINC 1 class, there are 1 or 2 literacy students in my class. Literacy learners need much more time and support to understand the PBLA concepts and PBLA tasks such as goal setting, needs assessment, filling in the tracking sheets, etc. For example, it takes 1-2 minutes for my mainstream LINC 1 students to fill in their tracking sheets and put an artefact in their Language Companion, but it would take my literacy students at least 10 minutes to do the task. Literacy students always felt rushed when they were learning with mainstream ESL students. It usually takes about 30 minutes to do needs assessment with my LINC 1 students. For literacy students, it could be hours with careful build-up.

PBLA is rooted in educational practices for k-12 learners. Adults learn differently and newcomers often learn differently as well. PBLA forces adults to learn differently rather than building on their learning skills and experiences.

Literacy focuses on skills and not tasks.

students don't understand "needs assessment", self reflection or even filing their assessments teachers have to physically put the assessments at the right place and its difficult to give a feedback wo the student after assessment.

It takes the focus away from survival English and directs it to teaching to tests.

I can make level 1 assessments. But I have no resources for teaching at literacy level, so my literacy student just has to absorb what she can in my mainstream class. This slows her progress so much. She could learn so much faster given appropriate resources.

Maintaining attendance and commitments from learners during a time when pressure to work detract from study time.

Time required. The necessity for constant repetition. understanding the rubric.

Needs assessment, goal setting, learner reflection, self-assessment, trying to do "real-world" tasks. They need a lot of skill building at this level!

Creating assessments and rubrics that allow for a broad range of success.

They are so low level.

There are no supports for literacy learners at this level. Teachers do not have the time to provide needed support as class sizes are large, not adapted to literacy learners.

**Question 15: What resources or supports do you think could benefit and improve PLBA implementation in classes with literacy learners?**

Limit its implementation at low levels (especially pre-benchmark, L1, and L2).

Teacher Assistant to support multi-level classrooms, Volunteer training, Dedicated time on use of technology for multi-level classrooms

I'd love a Literacy Language Companion. Expanded acceptable assessments based on the additional learning skills that literacy students need to learn.

More pre-made assessments and resources for Pre-Benchmark Literacy.

ESL teachers with training in ESL that can pave the way to ESL literacy training.

a teaching assistant to help give support during assessment tasks and provide additional skill-building opportunities.

It's always good to have more real world tasks (such as skill using tasks) specific for literacy learners as well as classroom resources that help instructors implement PBLA.

A significantly smaller Language Companion for lower level literacy clients.

More strictly Literacy research or what others have had success with.

Simple real world tasks that are community related.

Dedicated literacy classes for CLB 1 - 3 as the speed of teaching needs to be modified (slower and with more repetition) from regular CLB classes.

Time to find already made task based assessments, compiling time for future reference, modifying content or task according to learner.

Funding for TA's, funding for specialized training, small class sizes and specialized literacy classes. Language Companions are more academically focused (both literacy and non literacy) which can be overwhelming to students who do not have this skill set.

The instructor is the one that is going to make a difference regardless of however resources we have available. It is our approach towards literacy learners that is going to prove effective..
Modules on various topics.
New materials that are meant for students living in Ontario.
Explicit training on teaching reading/writing skills and strategies to literacy learners with instruction on creating suitable materials/worksheets/artefacts. More ready made blended modules for literacy levels in the common settlement themes would be the dream! to literacy.
Real world tasks...YouTube...educational videos...books...library and online resources.
Picture books to explain the language companion.
Volunteers and a bank of literacy assessments with rubrics.
If there are some workshops or special training provided to the literacy teachers, that would be great. Secondly, Teacher assistant plays vital roles on the support. The students who struggle in learning/improving their English skills because of number of reasons like never went to school before, have trauma and so on, they get extra support to catch up the things to move forward in faster pace.
Fewer number of assessments per week.
Pictures, videos, hands-on-training.
Providing instructors with samples of PBLA assessments in all competencies.
Every literacy centre should be provided with mental health workers, trained professionals to work with learners with disabilities.
Literacy classes - not integrated into mainstream classes.
Changing some of the requirements of PBLA for Foundations students such as needs assessment, the way to assess reading skills and goals. It would be great to have a curriculum to follow for all skills for Foundations level.
Monthly newsletter for instructors with online resources.
PBLA should align with CLB guidelines. PBLA should move into the 21st century so that we are not wasting so much paper.
Money for tutors; an extra class once or twice a week for those with literacy challenges; opportunities for all students to shine at something such as celebrating multiculturalism, international dinners or chances to show their creativity.
More teaching materials, teaching assistants.
Smaller class sizes, more time to implement artefacts, dedicates literacy classes.
We need to conduct surveys on the pace of literacy learners. They cannot move up a level in 300 hours.
Lesson and activity books with assessments incorporated so teachers don't need to have so much prep time!
More examples of literacy-level assessments to draw ideas from, a quick guide to PBLA implementation in the literacy classroom (like a checklist) with examples of how various PBLA elements might look.
regular PD sessions, pre-created templates to use for inspiration.
A full class of only literacy students. A trained teacher.

Basic English skills and tech skills if online.
Special one to one time to guide reflection and time to assess also. A bank of LITERACY items which show the scaffolding necessary to read and write with online based level appropriate tasks by theme.
Adequate support, a Literacy PBLA trained lead, and paid time for creating Literacy appropriate materials and tasks. A national image bank for use with literacy learners from where a teacher would be able to retrieve and use images instead of having to look for Creative Commons, or royalty free images would be a fantastic resource for teachers. A tutela group for literacy teachers with PBLA Literacy coaches - a place where teachers can ask questions, share challenges with PBLA implementation and get expert advice or feedback and suggestions on how to make PBLA for literacy better.
Videos of how teachers approach explaining different aspects of PBLA to their literacy learners. How do they do peer assessments, needs assessments, and goal setting with low-level literacy learners? I want to see it be done, not just read theory about it.
More pragmatic teaching resources and topics.
Literacy learners struggle with keeping Language Companions organized and updated. This makes it harder on the teacher and time is taken away from instruction to help with this. It would be great to have workbooks for them to use and to write in to be able to keep all their written work in one place. I know that would be very costly, but it would be very helpful for teachers and students. I mean for writing tasks like writing their letters and numbers, copying short sentences, filling in blanks, some basic grammar, basic punctuation etc. The more technical skills that go along with writing correctly.
Better lessons/assessments readymade on Tutela.
Teaching materials in general (digital versions so an organization doesn't have to purchase hard copies that become dated), a completely different trajectory that allows for the LitF - 2L to advance without having to collect all the required artefacts.
Specific CCLB modules so instructors have professional models to follow.
Placement of the lit. students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good training in literacy instruction will enable instructors to prepare their students for success on their assessments. I spent over 20 years taking advantage of every professional development opportunity that related to teaching lower-level students, but still wasn't as effective an instructor as I needed to be. Only with the right training am I now able to teach every student how to read and write in English.</li> <li>• Meeting with and learning from other LINC literacy instructors across Canada.</li> <li>• Lots of literacy readers geared to LINC F – 4 students.</li> <li>• Skill-building materials for explicitly teaching literacy skills.</li> </ul>
Good smartboards and realia. Colour prints can be very useful. I find colours are very helpful to engage them and even have their eyes recognise easier.
One thing that comes to mind is that PBLA doesn't recognize that listening and speaking are also literacy issues. Literacy needs don't magically disappear after CLB 4.



I am a new literacy teacher so some of my comments could be based on a lack of knowledge of what resources are available to me. That said, when I create an SU or AT for my students in speaking and listening, I use the criteria in the main CLB Guide which clearly outlines sample tasks for each competency. For reading and writing, I would like to see a similar format. In addition, I believe that a literacy section of the LINC Curriculum Guidelines would be very helpful.

CCLB modules - some of them are o.k. for literacy. TIES in Calgary, Alberta has been funded for some good resources to share. I love Minnesota Literacy... I can adapt some to generate a PBLA artifact.

More modified assessments. Also, students are expected to do a large part of their work online now and this is a big challenge for literacy students in a mainstream class (unless they have a lot of family support).

More time for preparation and assessment.

Use of bilingual dictionaries, google translator and lot of simple and clear pictures.

Assessments, and more real-world practical SU worksheets.

1. The online self-directed course: An Orientation to the CLB: ESL for ALL (CCLB) and accompanying resource materials  
2. Support from the provincial associations for newcomer serving organizations  
3. The online course: Teaching EAL Literacy Learners (TELLS) offered by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)  
4. Literacy teams (literacy teachers and resource teachers) within each LINC program  
5. Prepared curriculum (including assessment and skills using activities) developed to align with the high-frequency topic areas and distributed nation-wide

Diagnosis of learning problems.

More time per class; in order to implement a lot of these aspects of PBLA, I find I'm working more than the expected hours, partially in terms of prep, partially in terms of instructor interaction (sometimes PD, sometimes casual) which I mentioned as being important in a prior question. Increased access to interpreters help explain some aspects of PBLA would also likely be really helpful. It can take a lot of time to explain things like self-reflection and needs assessments that could be cut with more access to interpreters. It's totally possible to explain the concepts in my experience, but needs either more time or more support in the clients primary language.

Modules that are both are written for classes that have both literacy and non literacy students in them. For example, the LINC 3 module on calling 911 would be written for both regular LIINC 3 learners and literacy LINC 3 learners.

Pre-made literacy materials for PBLA.

Using the ESL for ALL continuums is overwhelming for many (myself included). Separate R/W 'guidebooks' of activities for each item in the continuum, and at each stage, that instructors could reference for easy templates/examples for making their own class/learner specific materials.

More PD or more available certificates, workshops, courses...

Stage I classes shouldn't have to have 20 students. When the profile is mixed it's too many students. MORE Multi level PBLA modules at lower levels with supporting materials, H5P activities, assessment tasks needed urgently.

A set of standardized task-based textbooks (that would ideally lead in to and be continued in later levels) beyond the language companion that provide a common foundation.
The approach we have taken with an IRCC-supported position of LINC Literacy Lead.
A gradual introduction as they increase in level. Needs Assessment at FL/1, the rest (reflection, goal setting etc. at 2L).
We could definitely use Teacher Assistants again, especially if there is a return to the classroom. In addition, the standards for PBLA such as needs assessments, number of assessments, etc. should be different than mainstream.
ESL FOR ALL and Real world tasks. Also New literacy teachers need to have support to really understand Literacy.
- train ALL staff which includes managers and other level teachers in what literacy really is. - all literacy teachers should have a point of contact who can help answer their questions. - have resources available for mixed classes like mine. Not much available on tutela. Most of the stuff on there is what I uploaded! - If we continue with PBLA then it is important to increase the number of hours of the class.
The literacy Language Companion is appalling bad; it goes against all best practices for literacy.
Bow Valley College literacy readers. Right to Learn. Donna Bowler resources.
The pre-prepared multi-level modules from CCLBs were extremely helpful! It saved an enormous amount of time and there was no question about the assessments being level appropriate.
An aide in the classroom.
Translated explanations of the concepts into common languages, such as Tigrinya, Somali, Arabic, and Amharic.
Teacher Assistant support, help with filing and Language Companion management, resources that focus on "Can do" statements rather than grades.
Something very clear. I find the whole PBLA system and resources extremely vague.
Allowing extra time for literacy learners (working within a mainstream class) to complete assessments.
Get rid of the Language Companions. They are a waste of \$ and resources. Digital portfolios with visual media would be much more useful, environmentally friendly, less cumbersome, and far more engaging. It should be digital. This is 2022, isn't it?
Time, tech-support, instructional support, computer supply (not phones).
Expecting a certain amount of assessments per week/month doesn't work in most classes.
Removing the requirement for 8 assessments per skill and allowing the teacher to make the professional determination which they have been hired for.
Read the suggestions outline in this researched paper ( <a href="https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1273130.pdf">https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1273130.pdf</a> )
Modifying the Language Companion to be more literacy friendly and including ready made templates for PBLA concepts. Creating literature/videos in different languages explaining PBLA concepts.
Online quizzes/grocery flyers/art/songs.
More pre-foundation resources.

More ready-made modules like the ones offered by TIES.
Reflective activities and actionable feedback exemplars are very limited for low level literacy learners. Further exemplars and supports would be appreciated.
Themed modules (with images to support vocabulary, skill-building activities, skill-using exercises, self-reflections, assessments) created for a year (for each literacy level) and having an online "hub" where literacy teachers can upload their resources to share.
First and foremost, instructional resources because there is little available that is appropriate for FL and Lit 1 despite being described as appropriate. Also they learners need a lot of repetition to progress.
Plan the Profile of ability and Competency(s) for Literacy as is applied for PBLA. Good resources for teach literacy learners about the real world tasks in Tutela or Avenue would be a great resource.
Reduction in assessments, more teaching time and fewer formal assessments- more informal evaluation and classwork to support learning.
Needs to be a separate Language Companion just for literacy that is simplified, not so cluttered with just the basic information in it.
ESL for ALL
If we were provided with the completed lesson plans on all the topics along with the assessment, so that we would have more time to actually teach and not always be looking for material of resources.
I think we need human resource, EA, 1 for every two learners in a multilevel class in a small centre.
ESL LIBRARY/TUTELA RESOURCES/SOME ONLINE ACTIVITIES.
Only some aspects of PBLA should be done with Literacy learners.
Specific literacy training for all instructors which would include how to teach reading.
Allow them to do fewer tasks per time period. Allow more time for skills-building. Have dedicated phonetics, grammar practice, etc.
More real-life task examples for all levels of literacy students aligned with PBLA. Especially Listening - Getting things done.
More multi-level ready made modules available on Tutela. We have used many of the ready made modules with great success this year.
It would be helpful to have assessments ready to use that align with the CLB but take into consideration literacy needs.
Consistent teacher training/refreshers on PBLA, especially for less experienced teachers; clear expectations of what PBLA for Literacy should look like.
More paid prep time for teachers, assistants or other teachers in the classroom.
A clear and detailed document or resource to address literacy needs.
A larger variety of resources; very few are available and what is available is for VERY low literacy learners.

<p>Many of the literacy resources available now are skill-building (i.e.: alphabet, phonics, etc.) We need more resources that are real world tasks for adult literacy learners. The Literacy Language Companion should have more simplified information, more simplified vocabulary, bigger bolder letters, more pictures, and updated real world content. An interactive digital literacy Language Companion Language Companion would be great, along side the physical Language Companion. Maybe consider a Language Companion app to go with the physical Language Companion?</p>
<p>Very basic introduction to skills. Also separate class for Literacy learners, specific training, removal of testing requirements or at least lowered expectations.</p>
<p>CCLB put all this money into creating a separate CLB description for literacy learners, because they are very different. Why would they assume that literacy learners can be assessed in the same way as mainstream learners?</p>
<p>Literacy focused PBLA training and support groups.</p>
<p>More picture based resources. A simplified version of the portfolio.</p>
<p>A Language Companion for Literacy alone. Filled with pictures and simple words. Lessons created for what is required for a literacy student to know before going to CLB1. It is challenging for a teacher to know what they should cover before they can move the student on.</p>
<p>Literacy Appropriate Needs Assessment Sheets or online document. Literacy appropriate Goal Setting sheet. Literacy Appropriate Reflection Sheet.</p>
<p>Tutela resources.</p>
<p>More staff training in dealing with various ethnic groups.</p>
<p>Extra help in class-an assistant teacher, field trips to show the real world tasks.</p>
<p>More resources for literacy teachers. Literacy teachers need a LINC curriculum activity book. It only stratus from level 1-8 but doesn't cater to literacy.</p>
<p>Dedicated literacy classes, a curriculum we could follow.</p>
<p>Get rid of PBLA and implement a more useful, relevant means to teach English. It does not work for me and it does not work for all learners. I have a lot of frustrated learners stuck in a level they don't belong in learning English in a way that doesn't work for them.</p>
<p>The promised resources.</p>
<p>Reduce the number of assessments to 5-6 and/or include assessments of literacy progress i.e. Reading levels, sight words, phonemic awareness etc.</p>
<p>Modifying assessment requirements.</p>
<p>Blended modules for literacy classes and levels, H5P activities, and phonics books for adults.</p>
<p>The actual skills of reading and writing should be broken down properly (letter names, letter sounds, rules of spelling (silent e, bossy r), etc. if we're going to be able to use it to teach reading and writing effectively. If students are only rote memorizing vocabulary, most will get nowhere.</p>
<p>More ready-made module plans put out by the CCLB. There are multi-level plans, so why not other multi-levels (such as 2L/3L) as well as single level for all the themes covered in LINC.</p>
<p>Understanding that not all areas in Canada have dedicated literacy programs above Foundations level, supports for integrating and supporting Literacy Learners in regular LINC classes.</p>
<p>Purely image-based listening assessments and activities, more literacy-based S/R/W activities.</p>
<p>volunteers who can work with literacy students one-on-one to do the PBLA tasks separately.</p>

modified check lists instead of PBLA for Foundations/CLB 1,2.
if at all there's assessments proper assessments , tools, feedback. self reflection and needs assessment.
PD at conferences. Opportunities to network with other literacy teachers.
Something like the LINC Classroom Activities books, but for literacy learners. It boggles my mind that I found absolutely nothing when I searched for LINC materials for teaching basic printing, sound-letter correspondence and introductory reading. If they exist, they're not easy to find - I tried hard! Connecting these to LINC themes would be my next request. And an assessment bank would come after that.
Mandatory literacy and PBLA training for instructors.
Regular training for all instructors.
Level appropriate modules/materials for each topic and at each literacy level. Modules that incorporate both online and in-person tools. If not, then modules that can be easily adapted to suit the program needs and instruction mode. There is a lack of level-appropriate video resources for the lower literacy levels.
Have an actual curriculum for foundation literacy up to CLB 3L.
More materials with pictures and very simple assessments.
Smart boards, Teaching assistants, small class sizes.
Smaller class sizes.

<b>Question 16: Do you have any final thoughts about the implementation of PBLA in literacy classrooms?</b>
The model as currently implemented has very limited usefulness at the low levels. At low levels, it is much better to slowly introduce a few of the aspects of PBLA in order to slowly develop an understanding as learners move up to higher levels.
Additional time to support multi-level classrooms and use of technology.
We need further instruction and examples for professional training days. Thank you!
Reading Rogers & Street (2012) might be beneficial for administrators and teachers to enhance their understanding of PBLA and Literacy Learners' Needs, thus ensuring successful implantation of PBLA in ESL literacy classes.
PBLA should be implemented at a higher level.
Overall I like PBLA, however it does place a huge engagement expectation on lower level learners. Many lower -level learners are not necessarily ready for this level of educational ownership without extensive scaffolding and modification from the instructor. PBLA also places a large curriculum development obligation on classroom instructors, whom may or may not have experience developing level appropriate materials, RWT assessments, or modifying PBLA resources.
It would be great to have PBLA that is designed purposefully with Literacy clientele in mind. Modifying what is made for someone that has years of school experience isn't the same. It needs to be looked at from a truly literacy learner's perspective. Thank- you.
LC Language Companion is an outdated method to track a portfolio in 2022.

The number of artefacts required to progress to the next level should be modified for literacy learners as they need more time in a CLB level to acquire skills, vocabulary and more repetition for retention.
I think it is a wonderful tool, the learner showing the learner what has been achieved and to what level, setting future goals.
PBLA by itself requires time, practice and training to implement consistently and correctly. Therefore, PBLA needs to be modified in a way so that these learners can develop their skills in order so that student performance outside of assessments (informal observation, skill building activities) have merit provided they are based on CLB criteria. Also developing PB (Pre- benchmark) criteria would be beneficial as there are many literacy learners in this level learning the very, very basics (holding a pencil, writing the alphabet, etc.). They need to build basic literacy, organizational, numeracy and language skills and so competencies should address these areas and allow students to demonstrate their abilities in a more relaxed manner.
Keep implementing PBLA in literacy classrooms effectively.
Literacy learners' expectations should be lower than regular classes, for example 32 artifacts could be collected in 400-500 hrs.
Teachers and students need to spend enormous time to implement it.
Motivating experienced teachers to keep teaching to literacy learners is a challenge and often these learners slip through the cracks and drop out of learning. CCLB/IRCC needs to acknowledge that this minority group is very vulnerable and need to fund best practices to train teachers as well as fund the time needed to create a program with supports for these learners to keep them progressing consistently in their literacy progression.
In order to be inclusive, PBLA should be simplified for literacy learners.
PBLA is not the right method to teach lower level learners.
-special training for literacy teachers- access of materials/resources that are level-appropriate - Teacher aide for literacy classes.
It's not possible in a literacy class with a ratio of 26-1.
I now have a class within a class. I am teaching the PFL and FL letters and phonics and the rest of the class is taught task based lessons. Implementing PBLA (1 assessment a week) is not easy.
Lower level students are not able to keep their Language Companions organized.
Literacy learners (especially level 2 and below) should not be encumbered with PBLA.
PBLA does really help students use the language learnt in class outside the classroom. However, it is so hard to create appropriate assessments related to certain competencies in a literacy context.
It is not effective or designed well for the literacy learner that needs extra supports and mental health support.
PBLA is working very well with all levels except Foundations. Having mainstream students and literacy learners in the same class require lots of preparation from the teacher's side. It would be perfect if we can have separate classes for Literacy learners and use different criteria to move them up to the next level.

Stop wasting so much time and money on these almost useless Language Companions. The language in each Language Companion doesn't align to the levels the Language Companion is aimed at. We need to get back to what our students need, real world tasks. PBLA and CLB need to work together. Their goals contradict each other.

Too many assessments required.

My students and I find the focus on assessments interferes with language acquisition. Too much time is allotted to assessments and not to learning the English language, culture and customs. It has been a daunting task to formally assess students while delivering a rich curriculum.

I believe that pre-CLB students should not participate in PBLA.

PBLA can be implemented in literacy classes but management as well as teachers need to be trained on how to do it for very low levels. In the beginning, the lead teachers had no clue what happens in the literacy classes and caused unnecessary stress to the teachers.

PBLA is a lot of unappreciated work- not by the teachers, students or administrators.

It can be difficult for literacy-level learners to understand the various elements of PBLA. I think providing teachers with the tools and training to facilitate PBLA in a way that is accessible to learners is critical. Often, literacy teachers will want to default to managing PBLA (language portfolios, artefacts, needs assessments) all on their own, without learner involvement, because it takes a great deal of effort to involve learners at this language level.

I'm very excited about what I've been learning so far! I think it's a great idea to implement in the classrooms, but will take some practice for instructors and students to be comfortable with it.

I think PBLA is great however learners do have gaps. I have and still am teaching from L to CLB 7 and I am often in shock when a learner comes to their next level with so many gaps in their English skills. When this occurs - and it is more often that it should be as it is not rare - clearly learners are being moved forward without the abilities needed to develop English skills properly. It seems that in some cases, learners are simply moved from one level to the next without actually having the full knowledge and skills at each level. Not sure where the system is broken in this way, however, it doesn't benefit anyone in the end. The learners, nor the community whether in class or outside of class.

More understanding of how long the literacy process takes is needed. People don't learn to be in school situations in a few months...and the skills to read and write take years given the other responsibilities these learners have!

If the CCLB could design literacy level technology with language Can do statements specific for Literacy learners for the CLB FL to 2L levels this would give a clearer path of the RWT for these literacy Levels.

It has been demoralizing for many learners as it takes a long time to progress to the next CLB. I have complaints from younger learners who need a foundation in language in order to work. For learners who need a LINC Certificate for Citizenship, it increases the time spent in a program trying to achieve a CLB 4.

Possibly more information to teachers, especially new teachers about what makes a learner a literacy learner, what challenges they face and why and how better to understand and to help them.

Level 1 resources are not enough- or suitable need more literacy focused.

There is a lot of discussion among our team of literacy teachers about the disconnect between the PBLA model and the needs of our literacy learners (especially at the lower levels). In spite of having years of training and teaching in the adult refugee literacy field (high school and adult), I am overwhelmed by the amount of time required to implement PBLA with refugee literacy learners while staying true to what their language needs are. I must add that my organization works very hard to support the teachers, the learners and be professional in the delivery of PBLA. I think we are doing the best we can.

Part-time literacy courses are pushed to create results on a timeline that our full-time program struggles to achieve. For example, paper-based reporting to students 2 times a year, which creates unrealistic expectations on teachers and students.

Let's not focus too much on the implementation of the PBLA for lower levels and literacy because at these levels students need to develop other skills before comprehending the PBLA purpose and logic, instructors are spending significant amount of time and energy whereas students don't realize the purpose behind this. When we ask our students if they refer to the Language Companions, review or study the "helpful English", check their tests, they answer NO, unless I teach some sections of it in the class (copy and give them the handouts).

PBLA is overwhelming and stressful for learners. It can create conflict for teachers. Also, studies have not shown that the implementation of PBLA has any positive results.

PBLA for literacy requires a significant amount of organizational time. I really feel this time could be more effectively used learning and practicing basic literacy skills that will allow students to become more independent learners and members of society. Once they have developed stronger literacy skills, they will be ready to succeed in higher CLB levels and PBLA.

I am very curious about what this survey will uncover, and I look forward to reading your report.

If they have a specific language companion just made for this level, they can benefit a lot more.

I have found that there is a gap between my students' ability to successfully complete real-world reading and writing tasks (from the modules, based on the LINC themes) and the ability to acquire basic skills. For example, I have several students who can pass my assessments without having the ability to read. (These students are using other strategies such as memorisation). It becomes difficult to hold the student back if I have enough evidence to move the student to the next level in these cases. Therefore, it would be helpful if modules, tasks and assessment criteria could also be focused around basic literacy skills (decoding, numeracy, etc.) at all literacy levels (FL - 4L).

Limit artefact expectations in literacy classes - 4 not 8. Create a standardized, sequenced checklist of literacy R and W expectations/goals for all teachers to use in designing lessons... not merely whether students prefer words for food shopping vs clothes shopping, etc.

Task based learning based on student needs works well in high beginner/intermediate levels. Based on my experience, Literacy students have lots of gaps in reading and writing instruction. They need a lot of skill building before they are ready to do task-based assessment tasks. In a mainstream class I don't have the time/resources to give them the skill building they need. In a literacy class, the pressure to 'put artefacts in the Language Companion' can take away from the skill building that students really need.



It has been most helpful in planning and monitoring each and every student forward movement in the development of their literacy skills.

It takes longer, but it can be done- end result they are more organized, they use feedback for improvement and it teaches them to take pride in their learning using English making leading them to be somewhat independent in thoughts and action.

I wish instructors (particularly low CLB instructors) had been talked to before everything was rolled out. I also wish that the planning for PBLA had included more curriculum and assessments, expecting teachers to make them all ourselves was ridiculous.

It is very important to continue to provide the finances, support and training to Literacy programs.

Literacy learners have a much different pace than regular learners. Placing both in the same class is frustrating for both literacy and non-literacy learners.

Using PBLA with literacy clients is doable in a limited capacity.

Most learners became involved, motivated, and responsible about their learning and found the ongoing informal/formal assessment lowered their test anxiety because they understood that they were discovering what they could do, they could 'see' how their abilities were growing, and could understand what they needed to work on. When you break English down to specifics, you work to help your learners understand each stepping stone skill, learners buy in. With each 'term', learners entering my class, would become involved in deciding the RWT goals, deciding when assessment should happen, and attendance on assessment days increased - because students had known it was coming, had been reinforced in their learning along the way, and understood what they needed to show, and were also comfortable knowing what they couldn't do (and that I knew it too) so they could focus on showing what they could do. I get very frustrated with instructors that feel PBLA only works with higher levels; my experience was that the practice, reflection, and self-assessment of PBLA, helped learners unfamiliar with learning a no-surprise structure that allowed them to build self-confidence in their ability to learn and do.

The students come with the life pressure of moving up levels to attain citizenship. The PBLA model can impede this life goal because it is rigid. Implementing PBLA with literacy learners mixed into regular classes means these learners are often left behind unless the teacher has concrete and specialized teaching strategies to move these learners forward. We have a literacy specialist at our organization who has studied the field of adult literacy for her entire career. She has also completed the Reading Recovery Training. She is the only teacher on our staff that can truly meet the needs of the literacy students in our program.

In general, PBLA has helped low-level literacy learners take pride in their work and make them accountable. They realize that school is important. This needs to be supported with meaningful investment in supports such as explicit instructor literacy training, a dedicated Literacy Lead and adequate prep and planning time for literacy instructors. In addition, funding to support small class sizes dedicated only to PFL, FL and 1L learners: no mainstreaming for low level literacy learners.

Can be difficult to implement at times.

A gradual approach would likely work better. Low level literacy learners are indeed adults, but andragogical principles have to also take the language levels (and literacy learner's unique characteristics) in mind.

Having Literacy learners in the regular classroom (which we do in my school) is a challenging enough situation without worrying about PBLA implementation. Keeping track of students' learning is obviously necessary as good pedagogical practice, but doing it with formal assessments is a waste of time and particularly energy. Needs assessment is an ongoing process; further our school has a yearly curriculum of settlement topics which we follow. So needs assessment for topic is not done or needed. Again, during any given topic -- indeed, class -- I keep an eye on what's going on for the students, which informs me of what they need and so I proceed. I ask them as well, so we're all on the same page. Reflection activities done as individual work are off the table. As mentioned above, these students are still limited by their struggle with phonics, encoding and decoding.

Implementation of PBLA is necessary and helpful for the literacy classrooms.

Literacy students cannot be treated the same as mainstream learners. They do not have the educational skills. They are learning English, but also learning how to be a student at the same time, which takes a lot more focus and time. Trying to teach them about PBLA on top of everything else is extremely difficult for both the teacher and students. It's too overwhelming, especially at the lower levels.

PFL TO FL- they only need to demonstrate a checklist of abilities that can be created from the ESL FOR ALL descriptors for FL IN READING AND writing. I observe my learners and make notes as they demonstrate alphabet recognition, realizing the importance of written language, ability to recognize their own name etc. as opposed to expecting them to complete "tests", the real world task is developing these abilities in class-awareness of learning.

We love our students and we want to help them learn. we don't care what system we use. we just need lots of support and resources. Our students come with a lot of baggage that we as teachers have to deal with on a daily basis and having unnecessary things to worry about takes away from the support these people need. we need to have a minimalistic approach with the classes - less is more! when making up rules for BPLA please keep in mind that the class dynamics change on a regular basis. I had just taught my Yazidi students to write their names when I whole batch of Afghans came in - they had their own trauma to deal with so they aren't regular with class, they are overwhelmed by the culture difference and as a teacher we are trying to help them settle as well! I have filled out several surveys like this one before and nothing has been done so far and I hope this time we get some support!

It is difficult because there are so many basics needed.

It seems really silly to be filing student assessments in their portfolios, when students are not in the building to see their portfolios. I wish there was a good digital option.

It's difficult to get literacy students to see value in PBLA.

We need more specific guidelines and expectations.

The studies show PBLA is ineffective in literacy classrooms as a means for objective assessment. PBLA has actually made things worse for our learners in the long run--why are we asking how many artefacts they have when we should be focused on what they are learning? Just because I have 8 reading artefacts doesn't mean I can read. PBLA needs to be scrapped.

Yulia's research from the U of T suggests PBLAs are not the best approach in LINC. We need more research into this.

The focus needs to be on the students learning the basic skills, vocabulary building and not so much on hitting weekly assessment targets. There isn't much point in having students write an assessment until you know they are ready to write it.

I really find it as extra hoops to jump through. I like some aspects, but those tend to be more bound up in the CLBs themselves rather than how PBLA is structured.

Portfolio Language Companions don't even meet the definition of portfolios as learners have no control over what is in them!

There are significant modifications that need to be made to support literacy learners through the PBLA process.

PBLA might work for higher levels much better but for literacy or level one I, it is too much work for very little benefits if any at all.

I believe that a portfolio of learning is very useful for Foundation Literacy and Literacy 1 learners so that they can see their progress. However, I believe that requiring 8 to 10 assessments per skill is challenging to implement. In my experience FL and Lit 1 instructors should use more skill using activities to monitor when FL and Lit 1 learners are ready for a RWT assessment.

PBLA could be implemented with Literacy only when it is designed the way exactly as the PBLA with the Profile of Ability, competency, etc.

Too many assessments are required for students to move up to the next level in a short time. 250 hours indicated in the PBLA best practices do not apply to the majority of learners whether literacy or non-literacy. It takes more than 250 hours for an educated person to learn a new language. Literacy skills are not enough by themselves, too many other factors are involved in learning a new language. Suggestion: remove any hour requirements for ss to move up to the next level. Promotion should happen only when a student is showing success in all four skills. Reduce the number of assessments required.

Literacy learners are unique in their learning and quite different needs from the main stream learners. Foundations itself can be further broken down into 3 steps- basic learner just learning to hold a pencil, understanding that print has meaning, 2. foundation learners that already able to print, learning alphabet and numbers, 3. learners almost ready for CLB 1L. There is such a big gap in foundations from beginning to end, it encompasses so much it just doesn't fit into PBLA.

PBLA is nothing but giving anxiety to students and taking away the quality of teaching. We basically teach to test NOT teach to learn. I do implement PBLA as it is required, but I assess my students on every single task they do, on daily performance they do NOT one nonsense paper they answer. I always tell them not to get stressed over these papers. They will move up when they are ready. This is was too longer for literacy students. They trust us, their instructors. I would hope that this budget the government has spent over the costly Language Companions would add to free resources for students. What a shameful thesis was PBLA since it started. How many times do you want to take surveys, run seminars to get the unsatisfying ideas of instructors and admins? How far do you want to take this unfounded project?

There definitely needs to be a process in place to ensure and determine if learners are in fact progressing. A great many of my learners appear to have learning disabilities, but these are not diagnosed and they continue to struggle, while I have no idea what I can do further. They need to be assessed, but not in the same manner as the other ESL learners and not as regularly. I feel that the focus of a literacy class should be to teach learners to read primarily and this takes a long time. The idea that they can pass ten assessments for each skill in a year or even two is not realistic.

The program expectations need to be realistic based on what a multilevel class is in a small centre and the material, technical and human resources available.

I think PBLA is good for CLB 3 and up. Below 3, I think they just need so much foundation to build on. Formative work is so vastly needed and the summative tasks so simplified that PBLA may not be a benefit to the learner.

Assessment for learning resonates with my praxis. Learning tasks constitute our classroom routine. The skills inventory sheets and assessment tasks based on the CLB competency statements can only be realistic much later--perhaps toward the end of 2 terms.

IT IS SO HELPFUL TO A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNERS NEEDS, GOAL SETTINGS, TEACHING, ASSESSMENTS,AND CURRICULUM PLANNING. PBLA HELPS TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN IDENTIFY THEIR GOALS.

I would like to see a focus on phonics and reading strategies where the instructor can use a different method of assessment like checklists to replace RWT assessments. PBLA should be introduced gradually so that in the lower-level students do not have to do as many RWT assessments. Exposure to all aspects of PBLA can be accomplished without students having to complete all aspects. My organization is rigid in their approach and will only modify with permission from CCLB.

It should be simplified for literacy learners. While I feel I e been able to integrate PBLA into my literacy classes, it's very confusing to the learners to be presented with this abstract concept.

Keep supporting PBLA with modules for Instructors.

Assessments should be gradually added to the teaching routine as students progress through the levels of literacy. Checklists and observation/anecdotal records are great assessment tools at lower literacy levels. Formative assessments and "Language Companion training " should start when students are ready (at level 3L).

It is challenging in a multilevel classroom.

There should be a set guideline for Literacy instructors on how to implement PBLA in literacy classroom to make it more standardized, because different instructors have their own expectations from literacy learners and so there are variety of levels of assessments and real- world tasks.

Our world is changing so quickly that many teaching resources are out of date. For example, people type more than they write. People read digital time on their phones, not analogue clocks. Increasingly, people NEED to be able to use a computer/cell phone, use email, and sign in to applications to function in our society. Teaching literacy is no longer just about teaching language literacy, it is also about teaching digital literacy. We need more literacy resources that are fused with digital literacy and reflect the real digital world we live in. We need more paid planning time for literacy instructors to create and/or adapt resources. We need more funding for the development of adult oriented literacy resources that are real world tasks.

It's not practical for literacy learners. PBLA for literacy learners was not really well thought out. It puts too much pressure on the students and the instructors. Most instructors are not properly trained on how to teach Literacy learners and most literacy learners are mixed with other levels. And the fact that classes may have 20 students, it's impractical and virtually impossible.

Ditch it.

I feel it is too rigid and asking too much from a new learner. Testing them formally and providing them with the results can be very demotivating for them.

It's not easy to implement PBLA in a Literacy classroom, but not impossible. Literacy teachers need time to create their own materials. Over time, I have developed PBLA that works for Literacy. It took a long time. I believe that PBLA wasn't created with Literacy learners in mind. It doesn't take into consideration learners with little to no formal education. Materials need to have simpler language, larger font and more visuals. Literacy learners are not familiar with the concept of goal setting and reflection in their own language.

I am curious to see how you can help.

Tested to perfect.

PBLA sometimes adds more work without program improvement.

Why PBLA in LINC? How does colonial/western PBLA support diverse/indigenous ways of learning? Are we colonizing literacy learners?

Need to revamp methodology of literacy and more teacher training.

It's too early to implement PBLA at Literacy level!

Literacy students and teachers need more support to implement PBLA.

I have a research background and it constantly confuses me how people use research to justify using PBLA. This is not the way to teach or learn English. I feel bad for newcomers that have to sit through this method of instruction and get nowhere for years. I have students in the same level for 5+ years because they fail test after test. There has to be a better way.

That literacy students need a dedicated teacher and a small class size and the promised resources need to appear. Full modules have not materialized.

Some aspects of task-based learning work well, but the volume of expectations needs to be reduced.

The term needs to be extended from 6 months to at least 8 months for literacy students.

It is very difficult to work around in literacy classrooms. It doesn't recognize the skills needed in reading and writing to build up to the real-world tasks and assumes all students at every level can complete full tasks when that's just not the case at all and then students see no progress for years. Break down the skills in reading and writing - as well as teaching teachers that there is more to reading and writing than "memorize these words" - and you will see better results in literacy classrooms.

PBLA in literacy classrooms is useless!

It feels like literacy was not considered in the initial PBLA roll-out. It's good to see efforts have been made since to address the unique needs of literacy learners.

Literacy is a skill that is really required before true PBLA of all 4 skills can begin. Written-based documents in a portfolio, even simple ones are not helpful and do not promote self-reflection. Less formal tasks and teacher feedback are more tangible to them and meaningful to help them track their progress in a low-pressure context.

Literacy students, especially those with no formal education, responds better with topics that are immediate personal needs. Many PBLA concepts are not that straightforward and require some educational experience to understand. It takes a substantial amount of time for literacy students to be exposed to and possibly understand the PBLA concepts. However, those are not the skills they need immediately to tackle their everyday tasks.

PBLA should not be mandatory in literacy classroom.

PBLA was not designed with part-time, multilevel, literacy students in mind.

Instead of implementing PBLA stuff we should focus on making them class room ready. Teachers will have more time and students less confused as to what is happening while doing needs assessment or self-reflection. The fear of failing doubles up when we do assessments that are demotivating for the learner and more work for the teacher for nothing.

I am a PBLA Lead teacher. I think we've been generally successful at implementing PBLA with our higher level literacy learners, but it's been a real struggle for the lower levels. Foundations and 1L learners are only able to do small portions of "real world tasks", so it turns out the tasks aren't very real world after all. Independent work is necessary for Assessment, however many literacy learners rely on collaboration for their learning which is not valued in PBLA. I'm Ok with PBLA for 2L and above, but I believe there needs to be an alternative way to assess very low level literacy learners. I haven't yet seen a good way to do that.

My answers here are in the context of an individual literacy learner in a mixed-level, non- literacy LINC class. I think this is probably the situation of most literacy learners across the country. Their needs are not being met. Thank you for looking into this; I hope your research will lead to some change.

IRCC-funded literacy classes separate from LINC 112 while allowing literacy learner to attend regular classes for listening and speaking for social adjustment. Conversation classes are a disservice to literacy learners. They need strong foundation to move forward beyond stage 1. Complete literacy resources for across Canada. Literacy task groups by province much like the smaller centres strategy. Funding model incorporating an L1 teaching assistant with large influx of literacy learner groups (i.e. Afghan, Syrian, DRC). Part time teaching assistant roles for these classes. I'd be most interested in further work on these important areas of LINC as I see schools dropping literacy classes for internal reasons.

There should be a different criteria or selective implementation of certain components appropriate for literacy learners. The total number of assessments for 250-300 hours of instruction should also be re-evaluated. A lot of the literacy learners have other issues as well. The original research was based on learners not facing health, family and other learning issues. The teacher has to spend extra time to put the students' language companions in order and to do that again when some of them mix things up. Even if there is a CA, it takes a lot of time explaining things to them, and then the teacher still needs to check and correct if necessary. And it is better to do it with students individually, so it takes away from the class time. If Avenue.ca will be rolled out nationally, then support or additional time will be required to manage and update e-portfolios in addition to the physical ones.

It is challenging.

If learners are no longer supposed to be literacy learners in CLB 5, then SPOs that teach the lower levels need to re-look at the ability expected of their literacy learners before passing them into that level. Otherwise, we need more supports and smaller class sizes for intermediate level programs that have literacy learners.

## Appendix B: Small-Group Meetings

Successes Implementing PBLA
The needs assessment has increased learner buy-in and attendance.
The Continuum in ESL for ALL has been used to find learner gaps and address these gaps through specific/explicit instruction.
Not being so prescriptive with what we count as an assessment/artefact. We view skill-building tasks in literacy, and in particular Foundations and 1L, as skill-using tasks. This includes things like decoding, holding a pencil, copying, etc. We can't expect the learners to fully and independently complete a real-world task that requires reading or writing when they are still building those skills.
For a lot of places PBLA has become a testing mill. We view PBLA as a process, not a product.
We make the PBLA process an integrated party of classroom practice.
Lower class sizes led to greater student success.
A funded project from 2018-2021 to figure out how to implement and operationalize ESL for ALL into their programming. The project allowed for a literacy research position as well as positions of LSI (literacy specialty instruction). These positions worked to meet both literacy learner needs and literacy instructor needs.
The "literacy lead teacher" position works as an EA to pull out learners for one-on-one support and offer additional support to teachers.
PBLA doesn't work if you don't adapt it. Only if you think of it as extra-linguistic does it start to work, and work well, for both literacy and mainstream learners. It should be a tool to support them and the instructors and when organizations acknowledge it the system works well.
Pictographic needs assessments are empowering to learners.
The Language Companions, when used properly, can show the learner their progress and they feel pride in that.
If we're not too prescriptive about PBLA, and if we don't overthink it, it provides an organized, tangible way of learning for literacy learners. But it must be adapted and the learners' reading and writing skill-building must be treated as a real-world task and be counted as artefacts that demonstrate their progress.
The size of our organization allows for dedicated literacy classrooms. This helps instructors target their instruction for the literacy learners.
Our instructors from literacy to CLB 4 receive in-house literacy training (12 week, 120 hours approx.) so they can support literacy learners in their classes.
The needs assessment leads to student autonomy-- particularly for students who have been in the program for a long time. They can clearly tell us what they already know and what they still need to learn.
Language Companion management becomes part of document organization. This is important because many of our students have kids in school with Language Companions and important information may come home in the Language Companions.



Specifically, the calendar/personal information parts of our learners' Language Companions are very valuable within class.

Our organization modified the PBLA literacy Language Companion to our own system that was much more simple and met the learners' needs. We add complexity as they move through our levels of 1L.

Parts of PBLA encourage class voting and "check ins" to monitor what they want to learn and what they have learned so far. It helps make them part of the learning process. While it takes time, it eventually leads to learner "buy in."

As part of our simplified/modified PBLA Language Companion system we use specific "skills icons" on each worksheet to help the learners organize their papers but, more importantly, it helps them think metacognitively about the skills they are doing/learning.

We use a very simple "thumbs up/so-so/thumbs down" system to get immediate feedback on our activities. "What did you think?" "Was it easy, so-so, or hard?" The immediate feedback help the learners feel like they have an active role in their learning process and it also helps the teacher have a sense of the learners' progress (individual and as a group).

PBLA is great- it has made me a much better instructor but framework needs to change.

Dedicated team of instructors who care about their learners.

Supportive community- got Chromebooks during pandemic etc.

Innovation and creativity.

Great network of literacy gurus- TIES, Setsu, TELLS, Tutela.

Literacy modules, TIES modules, Learning for Chocolate, ReadAloud.

In House resources that are shared.

Having volunteer in class when available.

Being flexible.

Supportive supervisor with passion for literacy.

Literacy learners are separate from mainstream classes.

Personal qualities- patience, creativity, ability to filter/grade language.

Has a motto- never assume anything (examples of what is a smiley face mean? What about the interpretation of directional arrows?).

Collaboration.

Supported by administration and team- need for extensive repetition.

New instructors bring freshness.

The idea of a "test" is important for learners- they want success and know they are doing well.

PBLA emphasizes the understanding of having choice- strategy.

Literacy Centre of Expertise (TIES).

### Challenges Implementing PBLA

Many instructors still view PBLA as extra-instructional instead of instructional. The "I don't have time" line is used a lot. There need to be a huge shift in perspective that views PBLA as a system where the Language Companion, and Language Companion maintenance is the job.

Many literacy learners are not getting properly identified at placement.

There's too much pressure coming from funders about the "numbers" and the "butts in seats" numbers doesn't reflect the realities of literacy learners. There needs to be a separate way of acknowledging their learning context. Language acquisition for literacy learners often isn't linear and/or progressive. The pressure to accumulate the large number of real-world, task-based assessments within the literacy stream creates the conditions of "teaching to the test" and doesn't encourage the time spent on the acquisition of discrete reading and writing skills such as decoding, phonics, etc.

There is a seemingly lack of consistency across the different organizations and boards. We hear about what other organizations are doing with PBLA and we don't understand how/why they are making modifications when we have not received permission to do so. Who do we talk to about this?

Lack of paid prep time for instructors. Literacy instruction, particularly within PBLA, requires significant amount of preparation. They often end up doing the prep during unpaid hours and this leads to instructor burn-out. If instructors aren't supported then the system doesn't work. We can't retain our teachers.

Many organizations/boards have management that don't understand the literacy context. The instructors and lead teachers understand it but, with the high turnover, what happens to the learners when the instructors leave? They are in danger of falling through the cracks.

Admin follows PBLA to the letter- too rigid for literacy.

Lack of clarity around ability to modify expectations/guidelines- some organizations are making modifications and some aren't. Who decides?

Funding competition- bums in seats mentality- literacy learners are getting lost in mainstream classes and/or classes with too many learners.

Lack of support by administration.

Not enough time.

Classes are too long at 2.5 hours but again everyone is doing different things everywhere... 1 hour, 1.5 hours, 2, 2.5 and even 3 hours could be everyday or only 2 to 3 times per week. Need guidance on how to adapt PBLA expectations to the class circumstances.

It's so challenging! Years of education are not always a good indicator of how quickly a learner will pick things up. Certain regions of the world seem particularly disadvantaged. Instructors need to be trusted to work with the learner where they are... with guidelines in place but not exacting procedures.

Access to technology- accessibility, inclusion, equity, equality.

Additional support with teaching technology to the learners AND the teachers.

Accessibility features for [Avenue.ca](http://Avenue.ca).

Not enough prep time or reporting time- could decrease with supports.

Lack of collaboration with others that support other social dimensions- community integration, family, comm. resources etc.

Lack of knowledge and support with other organizations providing resources around employment, citizenship and higher education- lack of time to do so.

Instructor didn't feel "successful"- lots of self-doubt.

Not a lot of orientation for the literacy instructor position- lots of trial and error to see what works and what doesn't.

Self- assessments and reflections too challenging for the lower levels- too much time taken away from valuable instructional time.

Progress too slow/or a lack of progression because of classroom dynamics, very demotivating so students are absent often or drop out- Idea of progression needs to transform for literacy.

### Supports and/or Modifications for Implementing PBLA

Smaller class sizes and dedicated prep time for instructors.

Dedicated literacy classes instead of integration within mainstream classes.

A series of webinars from people successfully implementing PBLA. An open sharing of these methods across the country.

We need a third funding stream that falls between formal and informal instruction. While formal instruction is delivered by language professionals and informal instruction is delivered by volunteers, there is a gap in services for literacy learners who are identified as "vulnerable populations." These learners don't progress in a traditional way but they still deserve high quality, professional language instruction. If there were a third "middle" stream that fit between formal and informal language instruction, this could potentially meet those learners' needs, free up waitlists for classes, and ensure those learners don't "fall through the cracks."

Literacy classes in the evenings to allow for literacy learners who have day jobs or family commitments in the day.

Consistency from the funders about program expectations and outcomes.

Funded volunteer training as volunteers are the backbone of a well-supported literacy program. They also offer critical community outreach.

More clarity about how to meet the needs of literacy learners with disabilities within PBLA. For example, when and where can we indicate N/A in certain skills (reading, for example, due to a vision impairment) in a way that allows them to keep progressing in their other skills?

How do accessibility rights fit within PBLA?

I would love to rethink PBLA as a system that builds in accessibility from the start. This is particularly true when working with clients identified as "vulnerable populations," as literacy clients are. Many of our literacy learners come with trauma, various forms of physical and cognitive disabilities, and other barriers. I would love some clear guidance about how we teach these clients in a way that is equitable.

Make a robust literacy training course such as TELLS mandatory for all instructors and administrators and even management who work within LINC.

Paid opportunities to train and mentor literacy instructors.

Acknowledgement of the continued and steady influx of low-literacy learners coming to Canada through the refugee stream. How does this influx change the way we think about our LINC classrooms?

Need to slowly introduce PBLA as progress through literacy levels.

Needs checklists to support instructors, especially new ones.
Phonics/Decoding should be part of PBLA.
Specific strategy instruction should be included as checklists and woven through RWT.
PBLA for New Instructors with Literacy included should be at CLB 3 ,4 and 5.
TESL Certification programs need to have literacy instruction included.
Literacy expert at CCLB and IRCC.
Consistent lead- ability to provide more guidance.
More samples of what things look like in practice... not theory.
Need literacy learners in dedicated classes or at least have dedicated time to address literacy issues- pull out/push in models so need TAs or volunteers or dedicated instructor.
Need flexibility.
Need volunteers or teaching assistants.
Need interpreters for orientation when possible.
Celebrate successes more- very motivating and gives inspiration.
For those really challenged with classroom learning, need community based class.
Skill specific classes- supports specific deficits.
Need something to model from- collaboration and literacy lead to support.
Every instructor should teach literacy at least once- and at the same time, not for a long time due to burn out.
Administrators/CCLB/IRCC needs to recognize that literacy instructors are not *just* instructors- they are instructors, care takers, confidantes, actors, advocators, provider of community and community resources. It's exhausting and stressful.
Need explicit strategy instruction- it's applicable at all levels.

## Appendix C: Tutela-hosted webinars

### Successes in Implementing PBLA

Program in Ontario with a dedicated literacy PBLA Lead, who is not in the classroom but does 1-on-1 tutoring with literacy learners. A large part of that is bringing them into PBLA explicitly. The other part of this for us was that we gave all of our instructors, whether they were PFL, FL, all the way to a 4L learner, targeted literacy workshops last year to help them with their strategies and to help them understand their challenges with implementing PBLA for literacy learners. Those two things: having a dedicated lead and targeted literacy PD for all literacy levels from PFL to 4L.

One of the things that was good with Bow Valley College was they had a dedicated program for higher level literacy, but literacy for students as well as it had teachers that stayed in the same program for a long time so you had experienced teachers. As well, we were lucky enough to be well-paid and paid for a full day of work in a full-time program so we had time to create materials. Because ready-made materials, I feel for literacy only works so well. It may give me a great idea and I may go from that and take them and change them to adapt to exactly what my students' needs are. I felt very privileged in that way to have time to create materials and to keep the materials term-to-term so I just tweaked them each time. But I think that was a huge contributing factor to our success.

What we implemented last year during COVID was having an online synchronous time devoted to developing reading skills using PPTs that were developed, believe it or not, by Laubach. All my literacy learners came online for that, even if they were sick. They loved the structured material. Also, we had small groups and so we dedicated a time to building those reading skills and that worked really well for our program. I know that ABCing is a more updated version of Laubach.

It's been very helpful that I've had a very good support with our PBLA Leads and our administrator. We're in a small facility and they have been very good at getting funding to get a teacher's assistant for me. So that's been very helpful to have her. We do big group sessions together and then I will often send the very low literacy people off with her to do extra practice while I work with the other level of literacy. So—funding is a great resource! This kind of teacher-assistant/instructor combination can work as a training or mentoring opportunity for new literacy practitioners.

We had a student who had literacy issues as well as special needs and we used, for the first time, the literacy institute of expertise cleaning module because she was looking for a job in cleaning. And, like the others, I had a TA and a new instructor who had never done literacy and I was able to use this package with them. The student was so successful—she got a job at Tim Hortons. That was while using the module and was able, for the first time, to be successful in the assessments, especially reading and writing which she had not been able to achieve before. So, I love those modules. Please: keep on doing those! For new instructors they're instructors.

I'm in Regina. We run a pretty extensive program here with literacy learners. One thing, especially during COVID, we have a dedicated digital literacy support person. So, we can make appointments and our literacy learners can meet with this support person. We provide devices for them and a little bit of training at the start, but if we're having difficulty we can connect with that support person. Even prior to COVID we had dedicated computer time so we have a computer lab and we spent time every week with our learners and that was wonderful. Show them these resources online and they can practice them at home and teach them how to do it in class.

One of the things that was very successful over the pandemic was the establishment of homework groups. So, working to create materials collaboratively to create materials to use digitally. That kept everyone on the same page in terms of implementing some of the PBLA elements online and kept us unified in creating consistent delivery.

In a smaller/rural perspective, the successes we have seen with literacy learners in our PBLA classes is when we have educational assistants or volunteers in the classroom to provide special support. If at any time we have somebody who speaks the same first language of the learner, that is an immense help.

We have a second learner screening when they come to our school. We chat with them to determine their level of vocabulary, what kind of command they have of correct sentence structure, and we give them a writing task where they write without looking at anything. What can they write from memory? If there's time sometimes the orientation staff will listen to them read, watch them read, and take a slightly modified running record where we can get an idea of the reading accuracy rate. Are they self correcting? That sort of thing. Just a very rough idea of their abilities because we've found that at the assessment centre they are not always accurate, especially with the online testing.

I use technology in my class. I don't only have students with literacy needs. I have students from level 1, 1L, 2, 2L, and we do have a separate Foundation literacy in our program at our small centre. Using activities such as H5Ps, which I create myself, I'm able to focus on the vocabulary I want. There are so many possibilities that I feel that, for PBLA, we should really consider integrating technology into the implementation of PBLA. Everywhere they go these students are using technology in their day-to-day lives. Especially any students with children. In Toronto, all the messages are digital. All payments have gone cashless. Technology is necessary. Most of them have cell phones in their hands. We teachers need more paid training to do this. Avenue is great but we need to get compensated for all of our time as well because it is overwhelming. I don't think we can move forward with PBLA being on paper alone. H5P with the immediate feedback helps them to do activities over and over and actually remember more. I'm just seeing them excelling. I've seen so much progress online. More so than just being in the classroom.

I've tried many things and I've found the EduLINC activities are really good because with the pictures they can focus, with the "read aloud" they can practice their pronunciation of simple sight words they've seen in class. It allows a teacher to really see what the students can produce, within the comfort of their own home.

When COVID forced us online and we had to pivot to incorporate technology we really learned how it can be a huge benefit to the literacy learners. Once they learn how to use it they are empowered and can take control of some aspects of their learning. They can listen again and again or complete an activity over and over from their homes. We realized the students could handle it and we learned that they really loved the activities.

In terms of reading assessments and real-world tasks. I actually give my students books to read and assess them reading a book. Some people don't think this is a real-world task but, really, what's more important than reading to your kids? I think reading a book is a real-world task.

Having ready made materials for the teachers to use (x3).

Training sessions for the instructors.

2 PBLA Leads, resources, paid planning time, and most importantly, many small literacy classes- F, 1L, 2L, 3L and 4L.

Ability to use images, explicit instruction, giving more time to complete tasks, and keeping a consistent schedule.

Dedicated collaborative planning time.

We have various resources available to support teaching and implementing PBLA. We also have consistent templates for assessments, which are reviewed by leads and administrators. Also had paid planning time, esp. during COVID.

Consistent schedule and an itinerant instructor who had one-on-one time with those who struggle.

Useful resources identified are: [www.laubach.ca](http://www.laubach.ca); [avenue.ca](http://avenue.ca); [readaloud](http://readaloud.com), H5Ps, [ABCENG.org](http://ABCENG.org); and Literacy Centre of Expertise.

Needs Assessments have been useful as they engage the learners.

Learners have been given tech and orientated how to use it. This has been a long process but very helpful!

Using crafts, cooking etc. has helped me implement PBLA.

PBLA Lead support is essential.

Orientations with translators, good number of resources, Supportive admin., TAs in classes until funding was lost, designated literacy classes.

Integrating skills into tasks instead of teaching the skills in isolation,

Separate literacy stream from FL to 3L, Good PBLA Leads, Paid collaborative time, Funding for ProD, Literacy Screening during orientation.

Technology- websites with the ability to use real world, colour images.

### Challenges Implementing PBLA

One of the things I absolutely hate is the Language Companion. I feel it's not a literacy Language Companion at all, for a number of reasons: the font, the pictures, the page numbering system, the tabs. All of it. It's not made from a literacy perspective at all. Also the gaps in it. So, for example, to say that we have four staff holidays in Canada is bizarre. I know what they're getting at: that we only have a few federal ones. Anyway, you have to be quite creative to use it.

I think what we experience is some of the problems with having to implement so many real- world task assessments and not having any guidance from PBLA or through the Language Companions or anything like that about how to teach reading and how to teach any learning strategies to our students.

What I find the most challenging is some of the PBLA requirements such as self-assessments, peer-assessments, goals, reflections, etc. I feel that in literacy that's a big challenge. It's difficult to have students have the language to communicate what their goals are, how they can reflect on an assessment, etc.

We're encountering resistance from instructors with PBLA to giving assessments to the literacy students in their mainstream classes. Especially if they have multi-level classes. So, our classes are already multi-level with two CLB levels per class. And then in that group we have literacy learners, so the teachers are saying: "we need so much time to prepare for just the mainstream multi-level, then we've got to do an adapted one for the literacy learners?!" First of all they don't know how to do it, and really, it boils down to the time it takes to prepare it. They feel like an assessment factory.

We have the same issue as well [literacy learners within mainstream classes with no added support.] and it is a big issue. And I'm jealous of all of you who have been able to get adequate prep and planning time from your employer. It's an ongoing battle for me. One of the ways we've supported these instructors is that we say to them: "it's the same test, you don't need to develop a different test, just reduce the quantity and increase the font size for the literacy learners." Having to create a completely different assessment in our limited prep and planning environment is too onerous on our staff.

The classes, particularly in the evening, that have more literacy learners, we're in a position where nobody wants to teach them. Inevitably we have new teachers coming in and of course they need a lot of support. For me it's not ideal that a new instructor comes in without much experience or literacy training and then of course retaining teachers to teach literacy is a problem we're coming up against as well. A lot of the more experienced instructors are now retiring. How do we fill the gap for those classes?

In a smaller/rural centre, our PBLA classes range in stages (multi-levels), which is another challenge. We do a lot of tutoring in rural centres so in that case we can't use PBLA. So what would PBLA mean to tutoring?

In small/rural centres we find PBLA really difficult to implement in the spirit of what it was meant to be. We tried to adapt it to our realities. That is, that our teachers are meeting learners two are working during the day. They meet twice a week, six hours a week in total. How many artefacts can they gather? Our attendance is not very regular because most of our learners work shifts and their schedules change. Therefore, getting adequate artefacts from the learners is often a challenge. We are adapting and doing the best we can.



I feel, especially for Foundation, that PBLA is going in the wrong direction. The reading assessment is not assessing what we actually assess for a Foundation learner. We need to assess if the learner knows letter names, letters sounds, if the learner can blend to get ready for reading. But, we just have to do this in addition to the PBLA requirements and that's a real big issue. I truly hope there will be changes, especially for the Foundation and CLB 1 classes.

I face many challenges implementing PBLA, especially in my multilevel class, some with literacy needs and others without. voice saying those words and it gives you a better idea of what needs to be practiced more. PBLA can be done but it takes a lot more time with the literacy learners than with the mainstream learners and I find that technology can really help with that.

Having good literacy training is necessary for our instructors. There's a lot of potential there. I struggled for a couple of decades to try to figure out how to meet the needs of my students. And I could tell I wasn't really there yet. Once I did get the right training with a group of elementary school teachers—it was a two-year training, very involved, but it made all the difference. Now I can teach my students how to read and write.

Instructors find PBLA challenging in small centres. They often only work for six hours. They often have a daytime job. They are not comfortable with artefacts in a multi-level class. All that investment of time on their parts sometimes becomes overwhelming. So we do find teachers opting out of PBLA. Last year one of the instructors opted to become an educational assistant instead of an instructor, despite a drop in her wage. But she would rather take that drop than take the responsibility of the job. So how can we make teachers' lives better, easier. What supports can we give them?

Training and retaining literacy instructors has been a challenge. The concept I've heard about the lead PBLA literacy instructor is simply wonderful.

Students are slipping through the cracks.

Trying to multi-task with pre-learners, CLB 1 and CLB 2 in the same class.

Multi-level classes with true literacy learners and non-literacy learners in the same class.

More time spent on PBLA means less time on fundamental literacy skills like sound letter correspondence, decoding etc.

Continuous enrolment; multi-level classes with a wide range of levels; other learning barriers such as developmental disabilities, mental/physical health problems; low digital literacy; the Language Companion Language Companion.

The jump from a literacy class to a mainstream class carries a wide gap that is problematic (i.e.: CLB 2L to CLB 2).

A major challenge is having learners in CLB 1-1L-2-2L all in the same LINC class.

We've tended to ignore the peer and self assessments as the students just didn't get it and it was simply too frustrating.

Learner conferences [are challenging] too. It's very hard to convey anything during that conversation that they comprehend.

Task-based language learning is well supported in the literature. However, PBLA's emphasis on "real-world" tasks is problematic. I agree with the person who said holding a pencil is necessary in the real world!

PBLA in theory is fine and we at Bow Valley College were already doing it prior to it being mandatory. However, LINC's PBLA requirements are far too specific. That is what gets in the way.

Required number of assessments (32)- in part time program.

PBLA doesn't acknowledge the need for phonics, letter/sound recognition and blending.

FL- aspects like needs assessment, peer and self- assessment and reflections- too challenging.

Foundational skills - phonics, numeracy, printing skills, don't lend themselves to a real world task.

Multi-leveled classes.

Literacy students in mainstream.

Lack of Pro-D.

Lack of resources at F-2L levels.

Lack of time to teach foundational material.

lack of good numeracy materials at the lower levels.

Literacy level instructors are lacking a guiding comprehensive document that is easy to navigate , such as the CLB document from CLB 1-12.. Other three documents combined is too much to look at... CLB document, ESL for ALL and ESL for ALL Support Kit.

Lack of teacher training.

Time spent managing portfolios.

### Supports and/or Modifications for Implementing PBLA

I would create a Language Companion that is much more literacy friendly. For example, the page numbers start at one and move consecutively as they would in a normal book instead of sections starting again. There aren't many things in our life where we encounter that kind of format. Another thing is the font would need to be literacy appropriate (type, style, and size). I might even have more than one Language Companion because the literacy needs are so different across the literacy levels. I would somehow make room for more regionalization.

Here in Ontario, I think we are unique in Canada because we have both the federal LINC programs that are funded and we have a provincial level of funding. Our provincial funder has not supported low-number class sizes. It's based on a "bums in seats" model so our LINC classes we can cap at 12 but our ESL classes have 20 or more students and, in either program, we have no dedicated literacy class. All of our classes are mainstreamed from PFL all the way up. So being able to provide low-level literacy-only classes, even if they were for a short period of time while the students are socializing to PBLA and then perhaps mainstreamed, some kind of supportive funding framework for that would be really great.

I would like to see a progressive introduction to PBLA with our classes at the Foundation and the pre-Foundation level that we can have the time to introduce reading skills, phonics, learning strategies, and not be so overloaded with the number of assessments. So I'd like to see, for example at the Foundation level, maybe one or two formal task assessments in each skill area and then checklists and training for reading, etc. So I think that a slow introduction would really address a lot of the issues we're having, instead of, you know, having 32 artefacts for a Foundation level student who is just learning to hold a pencil.

You spend so much time on PBLA and real-world tasks. We found that it was a hard fusion at the beginning and instructors were saying, "you know they need to make a doctor's appointment, but they can't even hold a pencil, so how do we do that?" So, I think sometimes we overthink PBLA, but we basically said: holding a pencil is a real-world task; sound-symbol relationships are real world tasks. This might be skill-building in a non-literacy level or a higher literacy level, and so not technically be counted as an artefact. But at the low literacy levels, that kind of skill-building is a real-world task. So we just said to the teachers: "it's not skill-building. Don't overthink it. This is baseline." So what we need is clearer guidance about what "counts" as real-world tasks at the literacy level, and in particular the Pre-Foundation to 2L levels.

I would love to see some of the PBLA elements such as goal-setting, self-assessments, and reflections not be a requirement for literacy.

I'm trying to envision a role where a literacy instructor would become a lead and could potentially support literacy learners within the mainstream classes. Could become sort of an itinerant literacy support teacher and actually develop assessments for literacy learners embedded within mainstream classes. It would be great to have that role and I don't know if that is currently funded but it would be very useful.

Clearer guidelines about how to adapt mainstream assessments for literacy learners within a mainstream class. What kinds of supports are appropriate?

Specific funding for a lot more workshops and training time for new literacy instructors who inevitably end up teaching many literacy classes.

By the sounds of it, many programs have teaching assistants in literacy classes and their literacy program is broken up into literacy sub-levels. I'm in Ontario and we have all of our literacy students in one group without a teaching assistant. Unfortunately, a lot of students are left behind. Especially as we're fully online right now. Having an additional teaching assistant would be fantastic.

I would like to see TESL certification including a literacy unit or module. So many centres are mainstreaming the students and we need the teachers to understand those students and be able to meet their needs.

I'd love to see some sort of information session for program planners and managers because I'd like them to know more about literacy students to inform their decisions as well. Because we all know in the classroom what goes on but we're alone in there, or we can be, and I think people externally need to understand this as well.

I would have liked to have learned [in formal training] is an emphasis on consistency and some of the “nuts and bolts” practical skills of how to create classroom materials in a way that allows you to change the content very easily.
What I find is really missing is guidance or specific training on how to teach people how to read, how to decode, how to do phonics. And teachers have a problem because they haven’t had any training.
Teachers need to be trained on how to teach learning strategies. I would suggest that best practices in literacy are also best practices in a regular CLB class and they certainly don’t hurt those students.
There’s no concrete online training in terms of the ESL for ALL document. Although it has a lot of information about the learners, those concrete, explicit ways of how to teach reading and strategies. I find that I use the old literacy document more often because it’s more useful to the teachers because they can see how to change worksheets. The old document had examples and samples so I could use those to help support them as they made classroom materials.
If the CLB could design “Can Do” Statements specifically for literacy students. Right from Foundation to 2L. I think, especially in the beginning stages, it would really help us teachers have a clear picture of what they should be able to do. It would give us better guidelines.
When PBLA was implemented, for us in small centres, we did not feel it was for us. It was too much for us to handle. The expectations were often not reflective of the rural/small centre reality is. I did hear from some people who were partly involved in the PBLA design that they were doing it more for the full-time programs. We felt like we, and our contexts, were more of an afterthought of this PBLA bandwagon. So I would say that if you could have four different PBLA models: one is for the full time class, one is for the small centre/rural, the third is for the e-portfolio/online class; and the fourth for the tutors working 1-on-1 with learners.
One thing I think is missing is teacher training for literacy teachers. I had the wonderful pleasure to be in the TELLS course recently and I learned a lot about how to teach literacy classes. But this course is not a required course. It would be so wonderful if some kind of adapted version of TELLS course would be available as an alternative to the regular PBLA course. Our new literacy teachers have to take the PBLA course that does not cover low-level. It’s really difficult.
Ongoing, paid literacy PD would be great for teachers and tutors.
If the CCLB could have a website that had an image bank, organized by theme and also by title, that teachers could use for the material prep. It could be shared, could be used in H5P or paper resources, it could all be royalty free, literacy friendly, consistent pictures used and accessed by all teachers across the country. That would really help.
Assessments at the Foundation level don’t really reflect the success and achievements they attain. I’d love a way to celebrate those small, incremental successes in a more official way.
Opportunities to meet and share with other literacy instructors across the country. Opportunities to collaborate, share ideas, share experiences, etc.
Some dedicated literacy modules to sounds and letter sound recognition.

I'd also like coloured tabs in the Language Companions.
A graduated system where learners are introduced to aspects of PBLA gradually would be beneficial.
More strategies!!!! especially for PFL Learners!!
There is so little research with literacy in LINC, but check out: Abbott, M. L., Lee, K. K., & Ricioppo, S. (2021). Does portfolio-based language assessment align with learning-oriented assessment? Evidence from literacy learners and their instructors. Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Special Issue 24(2), 260-285. <a href="https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/article/view/31338">https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/article/view/31338</a> .
I think that PBLA should change their focus to a more of a journey-based Portfolio that incorporates skills to be able to do more complicated skills.
PBLA should give clearer Real World tasks for FL to 1L to 2L in the for of a journey of accomplishments for each level. A new CLB benchmark book for these levels.
I would like to see program managers given guidance on what flexibility is allowed for PBLA.
I would like to see a national literacy curriculum that is comprehensive, systematic, and explicit with the kinds of resources that are being produced by the Literacy Centre of Expertise.
Give them more time to complete the assessment.
We have given new instructors the chance to take the literacy courses offered by the CCLB.
Getting paid for the extra unpaid work and planning.
There should be sufficient comprehensive and clear-documented support for the instructors in creating real-world tasks.
More prep and planning time, smaller class sizes, dedicated PFL/FL & 1L&2L classes. Explicit literacy training for instructors.
Money for tech (iPad), dedicated literacy tutor, teaching assistants, more money for dedicated pro-d.
Paid assistants, paid time to modify resources, ready-made materials that can be used in person or online.
More training, resources, and flexibility.
Being paid the time to prepare materials both paper and online activities for the literacy learners.
More modules for literacy levels.
More paid prep time to take ready-made materials and format them for literacy. I have multiple levels and want to use the same materials but it takes time to reconstruct them.
I'd like to see more research to understand the progress of literacy learners. Anecdotally, I believe that many literacy learners are not developing basic reading skills in LINC.

Funding for digital navigators (digital literacy skills), funding for literacy specific PBLA Leads, funding for teaching assistants in literacy classes, funding for the creating of a more appropriate literacy Language Companion Language Companion AND e-portfolio, funding to make Avenue more accessible for literacy learners, funding to offer full-time job to instructors to aid in instructor training and retention, funding for paid planning time, a program to assessment and accommodation for students for developmental/cognitive disabilities.

I agree with TESL training for working with literacy learners!

Dedicated lit foundations class for Pre lit students.

Training needed: theory and method of teaching adults how to read.

I feel that Literacy learners need MORE time for each and every task than learners who are not literacy learners.

Training for Literacy just like PBLA Training.

The most popular parts of the training we did were hands-on, learning how to modify existing assessments and activities. What challenges a Lit learner has compared to a mainstream learner.

If we incorporate UDL principles, "literacy" resources can benefit all learners.

More modules- ones put out by the CCLB are very helpful.

Teacher training.

Resources like Listen and Match the letter CLB 1-4 Listening [https://tutela.ca/Resource\\_42308](https://tutela.ca/Resource_42308).

Different portfolios/portfolio requirements for lower level literacy.

Different timelines for assessments.

Literacy PBLA Lead FT.

Reduce the number of artefacts and focus on reading and writing only.

Additional paid prep time, paid TAs, paid reporting time.

Rethink/clarify expectations around PBLA and Literacy.

Literacy specific goals checklist alongside RWT.

Ongoing paid lit ProD, Materials with lit skill- building activities, more photos and manipulatives, videos of effective literacy instruction.

Include literacy skills as RWT.

Lead teachers need training in literacy.

Royalty free pictures.

Tracking tool that would stay with learners through 4L.

Literacy expert available to program officers, administration and leadership.

" I Can " statements for literacy.

Trained literacy specialist available to answer questions or provide helpful hints.

More sharing of information and discussions.

## Appendix D: Resources

Below are some suggested resources for implementing PBLA in classes with literacy learners.

It should be noted that there was not time to delve deeply into this topic with the survey, small group meetings or the Tutela sessions. There are far too many resources housed within organizations to compile a list. A concerted effort should be made to encourage organizations to share within Tutela.

Resource list as gathered from survey comments and discussions in small group meetings and Tutela sessions.

- CCLB Multi-Level Modules – literacy  
[pblapg.language.ca/part-e-classroom-and-professional-learning/multilevel-modules-2/](http://pblapg.language.ca/part-e-classroom-and-professional-learning/multilevel-modules-2/)
- CCLB Professional Learning Sessions –  
Available through a lead teacher or at regional conferences by the CCLB
- CCLB training: An Orientation to the *CLB: ESL for ALL*  
[language.ca/workshopstraining/an-orientation-to-esl-for-all/](http://language.ca/workshopstraining/an-orientation-to-esl-for-all/)
- LINC Activity Books, as guides  
[settlementatwork.org/resources/linc-1-4-classroom-activities](http://settlementatwork.org/resources/linc-1-4-classroom-activities)
- LINC Curriculum Guidelines  
[settlement.org/downloads/linc/LCG1to5/themes.htm](http://settlement.org/downloads/linc/LCG1to5/themes.htm)
- PBLA Practice Review Framework  
[pblapg.language.ca/part-d-pbla-accountability-sharing-responsibility-for-success/pbla-practice-review-framework/](http://pblapg.language.ca/part-d-pbla-accountability-sharing-responsibility-for-success/pbla-practice-review-framework/)
- *ESL for ALL*  
[language.ca/product/pdf-e-020-clb-esl-for-all/](http://language.ca/product/pdf-e-020-clb-esl-for-all/)
- *ESL for ALL Support Kit*  
<https://www.language.ca/product/clb-esl-for-all-support-kit-e/>
- Learning for LIFE - An ESL Literacy Handbook  
<https://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/sites/default/files/Learning%20for%20Life%20-%20indexed.pdf>
- Avenue.ca  
[avenue.ca](http://avenue.ca) (users need a mentor and login)

- TIES- Literacy Centre of Expertise - modules, webinars, literacyreader  
[immigrant-education.ca/literacycentre/](http://immigrant-education.ca/literacycentre/)
- Bow Valley - “A Practical Guide to Teaching Literacy”  
<https://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/our-resources/publications-resources/practical-guide-teaching-esl-literacy>
- Bow Valley Literacy Readers  
[globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/learners/readers.php](http://globalaccess.bowvalleycollege.ca/learners/readers.php)
- ISANS - Teaching English to Literacy Learners (TELLS) Instructor Training Course  
Contact the manager of Language Services, ISANS
- Tutela - webinars, resources (users need to set up a free account)  
[Tutela.ca](http://Tutela.ca)
- ISANS Literacy Curriculum  
Available on [Tutela](http://Tutela)
- Shona Nichols - My Canadian English (YouTube)  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/mycanadianenglishshonanichols>
- Real World Tasks\_  
[www.realworldtasks.ca](http://www.realworldtasks.ca)
- Ellii  
[ellii.com](http://ellii.com) (users need a subscription account to access)
- Making It Real - Literacy Council of Minnesota  
[literacymn.org/](http://literacymn.org/)
- Learning Chocolate  
[learningchocolate.com](http://learningchocolate.com)
- ABCENG.org  
[abceng.org](http://abceng.org)
- Ventures - Basic - textbook, available through publishers
- Starfall  
[starfall.com](http://starfall.com)



- Reading Bear  
[readingbear.org](http://readingbear.org)
- Halifax Immigrant Language Centre Readers  
[library.copian.ca](http://library.copian.ca)
- Hands On  
[library.copian.ca](http://library.copian.ca)
- Conestoga College Literacy Rubrics  
Available on [Tutela](#)
- Laubach  
[laubach-on.ca/teach](http://laubach-on.ca/teach)
- EduLINC  
[learnit2teach.ca/wpnew/links/learning-objects/](http://learnit2teach.ca/wpnew/links/learning-objects/)