Articles

Assessment Literacy and Portfolio-Based Language Assessment in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

Marilyn L. Abbott and Kent K. Lee

Assessment literacy, which shapes teachers' classroom practices and their views of high-stakes assessments, has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of interconnected conceptual, practical, and socio-emotional dimensions. We investigated these three dimensions in relation to lead teachers' and instructors' practices and perceptions of the portfolio-based language assessment (PBLA) protocol in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. Lead teachers (n = 68) and instructors (n = 138) responded to a survey designed to measure conceptual and practical aspects of their assessment literacy and their perceptions of the purposes and uses of PBLA, including the socio-emotional impact of PBLA on literacy learners' skills, attitudes, behaviours, and learning. Factor analysis, canonical correlation analysis, and ANOVA were used to explore relationships between the respondents' perceptions of PBLA and their assessment literacy, on-the-job training, and university assessment education. Results suggested that the conceptual/practical and socio-emotional dimensions of the respondents' assessment literacy were interrelated; those with on-the-job lead teacher training were less likely to perceive the negative effects of PBLA on students' learning and emotions; and university assessment education contributed to the respondents' theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment, confidence in their assessment knowledge and practices, and recognition of the negative washback of PBLA. Recommendations are proposed for improving stakeholder assessment literacy.

La littératie de l'évaluation, qui façonne les pratiques pédagogiques des enseignants et leurs perceptions des évaluations à enjeux élevés, a été conceptualisée comme un construit multidimensionnel composé de dimensions conceptuelles, pratiques et socio-émotionnelles étroitement liées. Nous avons examiné ces trois dimensions en lien avec les pratiques et les perceptions d'enseignants et d'enseignants responsables concernant le protocole d'évaluation linguistique basée sur le portfolio (ELBP) dans le programme CLIC (Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada). Les enseignants responsables (n = 68) et les enseignants (n = 138) ont répondu à un questionnaire conçu pour mesurer les aspects conceptuels et pratiques de leur

VOLUME 43, ISSUE 1, 2026 pp. 1–22
https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v43i1/1439

littératie de l'évaluation ainsi que leurs perceptions des objectifs et des utilisations de l'ELBP, y compris l'impact socio-émotionnel de l'ELBP sur les compétences, les attitudes, les comportements et l'apprentissage des personnes en apprentissage de la littératie. Des analyses factorielles, une analyse des corrélations canoniques et des ANOVA ont été utilisées pour explorer les relations entre les perceptions des répondants concernant l'ELBP et leur littératie de l'évaluation, leur formation en cours d'emploi et leur formation universitaire en évaluation. Les résultats suggèrent que les dimensions conceptuelles/pratiques et socio-émotionnelles de la littératie de l'évaluation des répondants étaient interdépendantes; ceux ayant suivi une formation en cours d'emploi en tant qu'enseignants responsables étaient moins susceptibles de percevoir les effets négatifs de l'ELBP sur l'apprentissage et les émotions des apprenants; et la formation universitaire en évaluation a contribué aux connaissances théoriques des répondants en matière d'évaluation par le portfolio, à leur confiance dans leurs connaissances et pratiques d'évaluation, ainsi qu'à leur reconnaissance des retombées négatives de l'ELBP. Des recommandations sont proposées pour améliorer la littératie de l'évaluation des parties prenantes.

Keywords: ESL literacy instruction for adult immigrants, language teacher assessment literacy, LESLLA learners, university assessment education

Assessment has been defined as the process of gathering evidence through a variety of methods and techniques "to support inferences about what students know and can do" (Pellegrino, 2020, p. 82). Given the important role that assessments play in society, it is imperative that assessment systems serve the needs of the stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, lead teachers, administrators, policymakers, etc.) and that the inferences made based on the assessment results are valid for their "intended interpretive use" (p. 81). Teachers form a key stakeholder group in assessment systems (Vogt & Tsgari, 2022), as they are tasked with understanding and differentiating assessment aims and enacting "a sound, cyclical process of collection, interpretation, use of evidence, and communication of feedback" (Pastore & Andrade, 2019, p. 135). The ability to execute these tasks is related to their assessment literacy, which has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses "an interrelated set of knowledge, skills and dispositions that a teacher can use to design and implement a coherent and appropriate approach" (pp. 134–135) to assessment for informing their teaching and their students' learning in specific contexts. Researchers recognize that assessment literacy is composed of interacting conceptual and practical (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Pastore & Andrade, 2019; Taylor, 2013; Xu & Brown, 2016) and socio-emotional dimensions (Chan & Luk, 2022; Pastore & Andrade, 2019; Su & Lee, 2024).

Recent attention to teacher assessment literacy in the general education literature (e.g., Pastore, 2023; Pastore & Andrade, 2019) and to language assessment literacy (LAL) in the applied linguistics literature (e.g., Abrar-ul-Hassan & Nassaji, 2024; Gan & Lam, 2022; Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020) emphasizes the need for a situated understanding of the construct of assessment literacy in relation to various educational contexts and also of the pathways to developing assessment literacy (e.g., pre-service teacher education and on-the-job training) in those contexts. For example, the introduction of a high-stakes national assessment system in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program requires the development of LAL in relation to portfolio assessment because all LINC instructors must implement the federally mandated portfolio-based language assessment (PBLA) protocol. While some LINC instructors

may have taken a university assessment course that fostered their LAL, this is not a job requirement. Nonetheless, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) provides lead teacher training for some instructors who then have the responsibility to train and support other instructors in their implementation of the PBLA protocol (CCLB, 2019). Unfortunately, PBLA "has not been an unmitigated success" (Abrar-ul-Hassan et al., 2021, p. 7), and the shortcomings of PBLA may be linked to the ineffectiveness of the train-the-trainer model that is used to teach new instructors about PBLA (Desyatova, 2018, 2020) and is likely associated with instructor LAL. However, the effects of assessment education and/or lead teacher training on LAL in LINC have yet to be examined.

The purpose of our study was to explore English as a second language (ESL) literacy instructors' and lead teachers' perceptions of the purposes, uses, and impacts of PBLA practices in LINC, and also the relationships between their assessment literacy, education, and on-the-job training. While perceptions of LAL have been the object of several studies (e.g., Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Lam, 2019; Roslan et al., 2022; Taylor, 2013; Tian et al., 2021), the study described in this paper emphasizes the underexplored socio-emotional dimension of assessment literacy. Understanding how instructors and lead teachers deal with assessment in the context of LINC and the impact of education and training on dimensions of teacher assessment literacy are fundamental for informing the development and implementation of more effective assessment systems and paths to LINC teacher assessment literacy.

Study Context

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

LINC is a federally funded program for adult immigrants and refugees designed to assist them in meeting their settlement and English language learning needs (Government of Canada, 2024a). The program has two streams: a literacy stream and a general stream. The LINC literacy stream serves beginning ESL learners who are learning to read for the first time in any language and also those with few prior experiences with formal education. These learners are very different from literate ESL learners in the general LINC stream who are able to use their first language literacy to support their English language learning. LINC literacy learners' language proficiency levels range from pre-benchmark to Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 4L, which is comparable to Pre-A1 to A2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (North & Piccardo, 2023) and novice-low to intermediate-mid in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, n.d.).

The prescribed teaching approach in LINC is task-based language teaching and task-based language assessment in the form of PBLA. The tasks are meant to assist learners in addressing their settlement needs (e.g., banking, employment, housing) (CCLB, 2019). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) introduced PBLA as a high-stakes accountability measure to provide the government with "reports on student progress and the immediate outcomes of language training" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010, p. x). This decision resulted in the phased rollout of PBLA in LINC programs across the country from 2010 to 2019. In a 2013 operational bulletin, the federal government added the following purposes of PBLA: "to address the need for a standardized in-class language assessment protocol in LINC" and "to measure the impact of LINC . . . on participants' language learning" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013, paras. 2–3). Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (2020) has described the PBLA protocol as a "standardized teaching and assessment method" (p. 13); in reality, however, the PBLA tasks and assessment measures are not standardized because they are designed or selected by each individual teacher, and as a result, they differ from class to class, even across the same CLB level.

In all LINC programs throughout the country, PBLA is "the authorized assessment protocol" (Pettis, 2014) for over 2,500 teachers (Holmes, 2015). The implementation protocol is outlined in the *PBLA Practice Guidelines* (CCLB, 2019) for teachers and programs. PBLA is a highly prescriptive form of teacher-based assessment (Abbott et al., 2021) that is mandated by the federal government and is used to determine whether students advance to the next CLB level, and immigrants need a minimum of CLB 4 to apply for citizenship in Canada (Government of Canada, 2024b). Therefore, PBLA results are high-stakes, as they are used to make important decisions that significantly affect immigrants' lives.

Fundamental Features of the PBLA Protocol

PBLA begins with an assessment of students' needs, and then instructors collaborate with their students to set language-learning goals and compile, reflect on, and assess a minimum of 16 language tasks every 12 weeks in the literacy stream. Students are presented with a PBLA binder where they compile their goals, assessment tasks, feedback, and reflection on the tasks. LINC instructors are required to teach their students about this process, to create lessons to meet the students' learning and settlement needs, and to design, administer, score, and report on task-based assessments. At the end of term, the instructors fill out a progress report and then meet with each student individually to explain the report using the assessment tasks in the student's binder. The CCLB provides training on the CLBs and PBLA (see CCLB, 2019) that all LINC instructors are required to take. The CCLB also provides training for and certification of PBLA regional coaches and lead teachers. Each local LINC site has one or more PBLA lead teachers who support the instructors in implementing the PBLA protocol (CCLB, 2019).

PBLA and LINC Literacy

Several studies of PBLA have reported the experiences of LINC literacy instructors (Abbott et al., 2021; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020; Fox & Fraser, 2012; Goss Gilroy, 2021; IRCC, 2020; Kawahara & Lent, 2023; Ripley, 2018). A common theme across these studies was that many instructors questioned the appropriateness of PBLA for literacy learners for a number of reasons (e.g., PBLA contributes to teacher and learner stress, has excessively complex requirements, and does not meet learners' needs). However, researchers have yet to examine the relationships between LINC instructors' perceptions of PBLA and their assessment literacy, university assessment education, and on-the-job training.

Literature Review

Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct that has predominantly been examined from two key perspectives: a narrower one that focuses on the competencies of teachers (i.e., teacher assessment literacy), and a broader perspective (i.e., LAL) that includes the assessment competencies required of various stakeholder groups (e.g., students, teachers, lead teachers, administrators, policymakers, etc.). While models of both teacher assessment literacy (e.g., Pastore & Andrade, 2019; Xu & Brown, 2016) and LAL (e.g., Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Taylor, 2013) recognize conceptual knowledge and practical skills as key aspects of assessment literacy, recent models of teacher assessment literacy (e.g., Pastore & Andrade, 2019; Su & Lee, 2024) have expanded the construct to include a socio-emotional dimension of assessment literacy. Therefore, our examination of the assessment literacy of LINC literacy instructors and PBLA lead teachers is informed by both teacher assessment literacy and LAL.

Pastore and Andrade's (2019) three-dimensional model of assessment literacy aligns well with Davies's (2008) influential work in which he identified the assessment *knowledge* (e.g., models of language learning, teaching, and testing), *skills* (e.g., item writing, test analysis), and *principles* (e.g., ethics, fairness, impact/social consequences) that were emphasized in language testing textbooks. In Pastore and Andrade's (2019) model, the conceptual dimension captures *knowledge* of assessment theories and models, assessment purposes, learning targets and assessment standards (e.g., language proficiency benchmarks), assessment methods, techniques for analyzing information gathered from multiple assessments, and how to communicate results to stakeholders. The practical dimension pertains to teachers' assessment *skills* and practices in the classroom, which involves the ability not only to gather and interpret evidence of learning but also to provide feedback to students that supports learning and effectively communicate results to stakeholders. The socio-emotional dimension, which captures and expands on Davies's category titled *principles,* reflects the ability to navigate the social and emotional aspects of assessment including promoting effective working relationships with stakeholders to enhance student learning; protecting student privacy; attending to fairness, equity, washback, and unintended consequences of assessment; and managing the impact of assessment on student engagement and teacher–student relationships.

The components in the three dimensions of assessment literacy interact within and across the dimensions, and they are influenced by contextual factors such as program and institutional policies that affect how the components are prioritized in the local context (Pastore & Andrade, 2019). For example, in the case of LINC, federal policies mandate PBLA, and LINC on-the-job training influences the lead teachers' and instructors' conceptual knowledge of assessment purposes, content, and methods, which impacts their classroom assessment practices. In addition, instructors' classroom assessment skills and practices affect students' emotions, which influence their learning and performance (Abbott & Lee, 2023a). In theory, teachers who have assessment literacy are able to manage and attend to the social and emotional aspects of assessment, including issues pertaining to student grit, anxiety, and opposition to assessment (Pastore & Andrade, 2019). Furthermore, "assessment literacy and the depth of the knowledge needed are seen to fluctuate depending on the stakeholders involved and/or on the assessment context" (Inbar-Lourie, 2017, p. 261). However, the relationship between different stakeholders' (e.g., LINC lead teachers' and instructors') conceptual and practical assessment literacy, and the socio-emotional aspects of assessment literacy, particularly in relation to students' perspectives, remains relatively unexplored.

Assessment Literacy in Context

Different levels of assessment literacy are required by various stakeholder groups (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Taylor, 2013) in terms of the knowledge, skills, and principles/beliefs/attitudes, given the local context (Inbar-Lourie, 2017). Teachers form an important stakeholder group, as they play a leading role in both classroom-based assessments (Lewkowicz & Leung, 2021) and high-stakes language testing scenarios (see Xerri & Vella Briffa, 2018). The educational context determines the stakeholder groups, the nature of their involvement in the assessment process, and the profiles of assessment literacy required by the various stakeholders in relation to their role in the system, which ultimately governs whether they need to develop, administer, score, analyze, report, and/or interpret assessment results. For example, in post-secondary education systems, one stakeholder group consists of university officials who create admission policies based on high-stakes language test scores (Deygers & Malone, 2019) and other criteria such as high-school grades. Another group of post-secondary stakeholders is university students who use professors' feedback and assessment results to improve their learning. In the context of LINC, the key stakeholder groups include the funder (i.e., the federal government, which mandates PBLA and accepts results as proof of language proficiency for citizenship applications), the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (which is a nonprofit organization that sets the national language standards used in LINC instruction and regulates

the PBLA protocol and training), LINC program administrators (who are responsible for ensuring that PBLA requirements are met by setting assessment policies that are in alignment with their institutional policies), lead teachers (who train and support fellow instructors in PBLA), instructors (who implement the PBLA protocol), and students (who are expected to engage in PBLA and use PBLA results to increase their learning).

Due to the high-stakes nature of PBLA, instructors need to have high levels of assessment literacy, as PBLA requires instructors to design and deliver the curriculum and lessons, create their own assessments, administer the assessments, and then score, analyze, and report the results. It logically follows that PBLA lead teachers should possess even greater assessment literacy, as they are tasked with training their colleagues in PBLA implementation. Presumably, the on-the-job PBLA lead teacher training provided by the CCLB would increase lead teachers' assessment literacy, as on-the-job training has been found to promote the development of foreign language teachers' assessment literacy (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014); however, the training model in LINC has been questioned in terms of its effectiveness (Desyatova, 2018). Nonetheless, the two main pathways for developing LINC instructor and lead teacher assessment literacy are through on-the-job PBLA training and taking university assessment courses. As stated in the introduction, however, taking a university assessment course is not a job requirement, but for lead teachers, the completion of on-the-job lead teacher training designed to support their colleagues in implementing the PBLA protocol is required (CCLB, 2019).

Researchers have found that pre-service teacher assessment education increases pre-service teachers' conceptual assessment knowledge and confidence in their classroom assessment practices (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; DeLuca et al., 2013). Given the critical role that university assessment coursework plays in the development of pre-service teachers' conceptual and practical assessment literacy (DeLuca et al., 2013; Sun & Zhang, 2022), it is likely that the LINC lead teachers and instructors who have taken university courses in assessment and evaluation would have greater assessment literacy and therefore be better equipped to deal with PBLA than those who have not. However, differences in assessment literacy between these two stakeholder groups and the impact of their education and training have yet to be examined. Developing an understanding of the factors that contribute to the differences between lead teachers' and LINC instructors' perceptions of PBLA and their assessment knowledge and practices may lead to insights regarding how LINC instructor assessment literacy can be enhanced. Those lead teachers and instructors with greater assessment literacy and education should be better prepared to recognize and manage the socio-emotional impacts of PBLA on beginning literacy learners and their instructors that have been identified in the literature (Abbott et al., 2021; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020; Fox & Fraser, 2012; Goss Gilroy, 2021; IRCC, 2020; Kawahara & Lent, 2023; Ripley, 2018).

Study Rationale and Research Questions

In this section, we highlight key insights from our literature review that informed our research questions. Although conceptual assessment knowledge and practical assessment skills have been reported to form the foundation of assessment literacy (Pastore, 2023), in recent conceptualizations of assessment literacy, such as Pastore and Andrade's (2019) three-dimensional model, the conceptual and practical dimensions of assessment literacy are assumed to interact with the third, socio-emotional dimension. Therefore, we hypothesized that LINC lead teachers' and instructors' conceptual and practical assessment literacy would influence their perceptions of socio-emotional aspects of PBLA (i.e., the socio-emotional dimension of assessment literacy). However, this relationship between the conceptual/practical and the socio-emotional dimensions of assessment literacy in the context of LINC has yet to be examined. Given the applied linguistics research which indicates that (a) stakeholder groups exhibit different assessment literacy profiles in relation to the nature of their involvement in the assessment process (e.g., Kremmel & Harding,

2020), and (b) on-the-job training (Vogt & Tsgari, 2014) and university assessment education (e.g., DeLuca et al., 2013) influence the development of teacher assessment literacy, we also hypothesized that LINC lead teachers who have received additional training from the CCLB and/or completed university assessment coursework would have different assessment literacy profiles than the instructors who may or may not have completed university assessment coursework. However, the effects of lead teacher training and university coursework on their assessment literacy remains to be explored. Therefore, in the current study, we addressed the following research questions (RQs):

> RQ 1. What is the relationship between the LINC literacy lead teachers' and instructors' perceptions of socio-emotional aspects of PBLA and their conceptual/practical assessment literacy?
> RQ 2. What are the effects of taking PBLA lead teacher training and/or a university-level assessment course on aspects of LINC literacy instructors' assessment literacy?

Method

Instrument

Drawing upon key aspects of assessment literacy identified in the general education and applied linguistics research literature (Deluca & Klinger, 2010; DeLuca et al., 2013; Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Pastore & Andrade, 2019; Taylor, 2013; Xu & Brown, 2016) and PBLA-related issues identified in the applied linguistics literature (Abbott et al., 2021; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020; Fox & Fraser, 2012; Goss Gilroy, 2021; IRCC, 2020; Kawahara & Lent, 2023; Ripley, 2018), we developed a questionnaire ($\alpha = .90$) consisting of 55 five-point Likert items to measure LINC lead teacher and literacy instructors' perceptions of the purposes and uses of PBLA, including the socio-emotional impact of PBLA on their students' skills, attitudes, behaviours, and learning, and their confidence in and knowledge of conceptual and practical aspects of assessment literacy (see Appendix). A questionnaire was used because it was the most efficient and appropriate instrument for measuring the dimensions of LINC instructor assessment literacy, and it provided the numerical data required for the statistical analyses used to address our research questions. Gan and Lam's (2022) recommendation to measure stakeholders' language assessment literacy in relation to the local context and our focus on the underexplored socio-emotional dimension of assessment literacy influenced the number of the items included and the wording (e.g., the addition of the initialism PBLA). The items in our socio-emotional subscale operationalize aspects of Pastore and Andrade's (2019) definition that are summarized in our literature review (e.g., the impacts of assessment on teaching and learning, student emotions, student engagement, student–teacher relationships, fairness, etc.).

The questionnaire was designed following Creswell and Guetterman's (2019) steps for writing effective items and conducting survey research and then piloted with four LINC literacy instructors. Given the instructors' feedback, revisions were made by two language testing researchers to clarify unclear expressions, simplify technical jargon, and reduce the number of items. The revised questionnaire was then piloted with two LINC instructors to ensure that the items were clear and the questionnaire would take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The items were organized in two subscales: 42 items that measured LINC lead teacher and literacy instructors' perceptions of the socio-emotional aspects of PBLA ($\alpha = .91$), and 13 items that measured their confidence in and knowledge of conceptual and practical aspects of assessment literacy ($\alpha = .77$). The Cronbach alpha reliability estimates for the subscales were calculated using SPSS (version 29.0), and the values were considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2010). Acceptable values of alpha indicate that the questions in each subscale measure the same unique underlying construct.

Procedures and Respondents

Convenience sampling was used to collect the data. After receiving university ethics approval to conduct the study, we contacted professional teacher organizations throughout Canada (i.e., BC TEAL, TESL Ontario, and TESL Canada, which includes ATESL, TESL Saskatchewan, TESL Manitoba, TESL New Brunswick, TESL Nova Scotia and TEAL Newfoundland/Labrador) to request permission to disseminate our questionnaire to their members. Once they had approved, the organizations forwarded an email to their members in which we invited LINC instructors who were currently teaching or had recently taught a LINC literacy class within the last two years to complete our online questionnaire that was hosted on SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire began with a page that provided respondents with information about the study and a guarantee of anonymity. This page also stated that clicking the "Next" button to start the questionnaire would indicate their willingness to voluntarily take part in the study. These procedures were designed to promote voluntary consent and compliance with ethical research standards.

A total of 206 LINC literacy instructors completed the questionnaire. The demographic information presented in Table 1 shows that 138 of them had not completed PBLA lead teacher training, whereas the other 68 had taken lead teacher training, signifying their status as PBLA lead teachers. Both groups were similar in their teaching experience (mean of approximately 11 years) and experience teaching with PBLA (mean of approximately four years). The educational qualifications were also similar across both the groups, with their qualifications ranging from a certificate to a doctoral degree. A higher percentage of PBLA lead instructors reported that they had taken a university assessment course (62%) than the instructors without PBLA lead training (43%); however, this difference was not statistically significant.

Data Analyses

Using SPSS (version 29.0), two exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were conducted to understand and summarize the underlying concepts represented in the two subscales of the questionnaire (the socio-emotional perceptions of PBLA subscale and the conceptual/practical assessment literacy subscale). Factor scores were used in a canonical correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the instructors' perceptions of socio-emotional aspects of PBLA and their conceptual/practical assessment literacy. Two-by-two ANOVAs comparing instructor stakeholder groups (i.e., those who received PBLA lead teacher training or not) and those who had taken a university assessment course or not were used to determine whether significant differences existed among these subgroups on the extracted factors.

Findings

Exploratory Factor Analysis

For the EFA of both the PBLA socio-emotional subscale and the conceptual/practical subscale, we used principal components analysis with direct oblimin rotation due to the interactive nature of the dimensions and aspects of assessment literacy. We also calculated the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = .839 for the socio-emotional subscale and .865 for the conceptual/practical subscale) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$ for both scales), which supported the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis.

Table 1

Respondent Demographics

	LINC literacy instructors without PBLA lead training (n = 138)	PBLA lead teachers (n = 68)	All respondents (N = 206)
Years of teaching experience	M = 10.7 (SD = 8.8) range = 0.5–32	M = 10.7 (SD = 8.3) range = 0.5–33	M = 10.7 (SD = 8.7) range = 0.5–33
Years implementing PBLA	M = 3.7 (SD = 2.3) range = 0.2–10	M = 4.1 (SD = 2.8) range = 0.3–15	M = 3.8 (SD = 2.5) range = 0.2–15
Had taken a university assessment course	43%	62%	49%
Highest level of education completed			
Certificate (no degree required)	3.3%	3.8%	3.4%
Bachelor's degree	23.1%	26.4%	24.1%
After-degree certificate	24.0%	13.2%	20.7%
After-degree diploma	9.1%	13.2%	10.3%
Master's degree	37.2%	35.8%	36.8%
Doctoral degree	2.5%	5.7%	3.4%
Not stated	0.8%	1.9%	1.1%

Based on an inspection of the scree plot, we retained nine factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 from the EFA of the socio-emotional subscale and three factors from the EFA of the conceptual/practical subscale. The nine-factor solution for the socio-emotional subscale explained 67.0% of the variance in the survey responses (see Table 2), and the three-factor solution for the conceptual/practical subscale explained 62.1% of the variance in those responses (see Table 3). After examining the commonalities among the items, we labelled each of the factors. Rather than reporting Cronbach's alpha, which is dependent on the number of items and represents the lower bound of the true internal consistency (McNeish, 2018), we calculated Coefficient *H*, which has been recommended as a more suitable measure when "attempting to isolate the stability of scores . . . regardless of the error variance associated with each individual item" (Kalkbrenner, 2023, pp. 84–85). The reliability values indicated that the estimates of *H* for all factors were considered acceptable given the exploratory nature of the study.

Table 2

The Nine Factors in the Socio-Emotional Subscale

Factor	Questionnaire items	*H*
1. The potential of PBLA in improving teaching and learning	21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 41	.86
2. Role of PBLA in evaluating instructors and programs	25, 26, 32, 33	.85
3. Inappropriateness of PBLA for beginning ESL literacy learners (BELLs)	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	.85
4. Impracticality and costs of PBLA (in terms of time – instructional + prep + admin, effort, teacher stress)	17, 18, 19, 20, 37, 38, 39, 40	.91
5. BELLs' ambivalence toward self- and peer assessment	9, 10	.87
6. High-stakes nature of portfolios causes students stress and forgetfulness	3, 7, 16	.61
7. Accountability in PBLA	22, 23, 24, 34	.87
8. Negative effects of PBLA on students' learning and emotions	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8	.83
9. Changes needed to improve PBLA (in terms of instructor training and the appropriate use of results)	36, 42	.66

Table 3

The Three Factors in the Conceptual/Practical Subscale

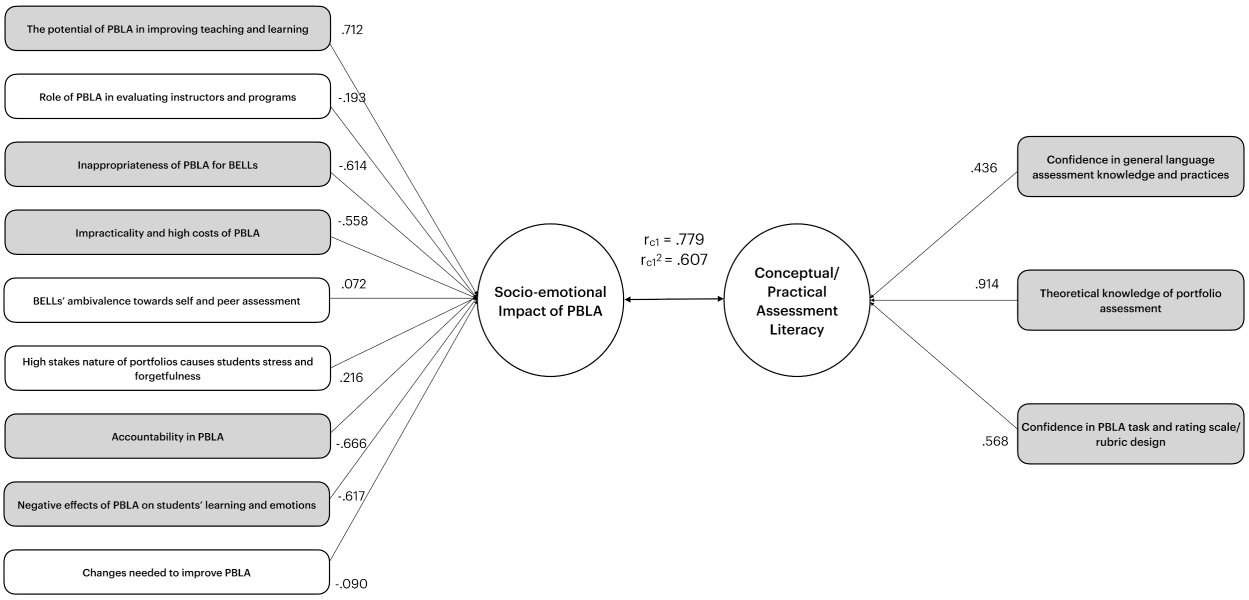
Factor	Questionnaire items	*H*
1. Confidence in general language assessment knowledge and practices	47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52	.88
2. Theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment	53, 54, 55	.77
3. Confidence in PBLA task and rating scale/rubric design	43, 44, 45, 46, 48	.91

Canonical Correlation Analysis

To address RQ1, a canonical correlation analysis was conducted in which the nine factors extracted from the perceptions of PBLA subscale were correlated as a group with the three factors extracted from the assessment literacy subscale (see Figures 1 and 2). The analysis yielded two sets of statistically significant canonical functions (Wilks's $\lambda = .313$, $p = .000$, and $\lambda = .797$, $p = .014$). These two functions explained 60.7% and 16.5%, respectively, of the variance between the two sets of variables. The correlations between the variables and variates provided information as to which variables were most highly associated between the variable sets. Correlations greater than 0.32 were considered important contributors to the canonical variates (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019) and were considered in our interpretations.

Figure 1

First Canonical Function



An examination of the correlations in Figure 1 revealed that five of the variables (i.e., the potential of PBLA in improving teaching and learning, inappropriateness of PBLA for BELLs, impracticality and high costs of PBLA, accountability in PBLA, negative effects of PBLA on students' learning and emotions) were strong contributors to the first socio-emotional canonical variate, and together they accounted for 40% of the variance in the variate (i.e., the percentage of variance each canonical variate extracts from its corresponding variables was calculated by dividing the sum of the squared correlations by the number of variables). The potential of PBLA in improving teaching and learning was the strongest contributor. Regarding the conceptual/practical canonical variate, three variables (i.e., confidence in general language assessment knowledge and practices, theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment, confidence in PBLA task and rating scale/rubric design) were important contributors explaining 45% of the variance, with conceptual assessment literacy being most important in determining the conceptual/practical variate.

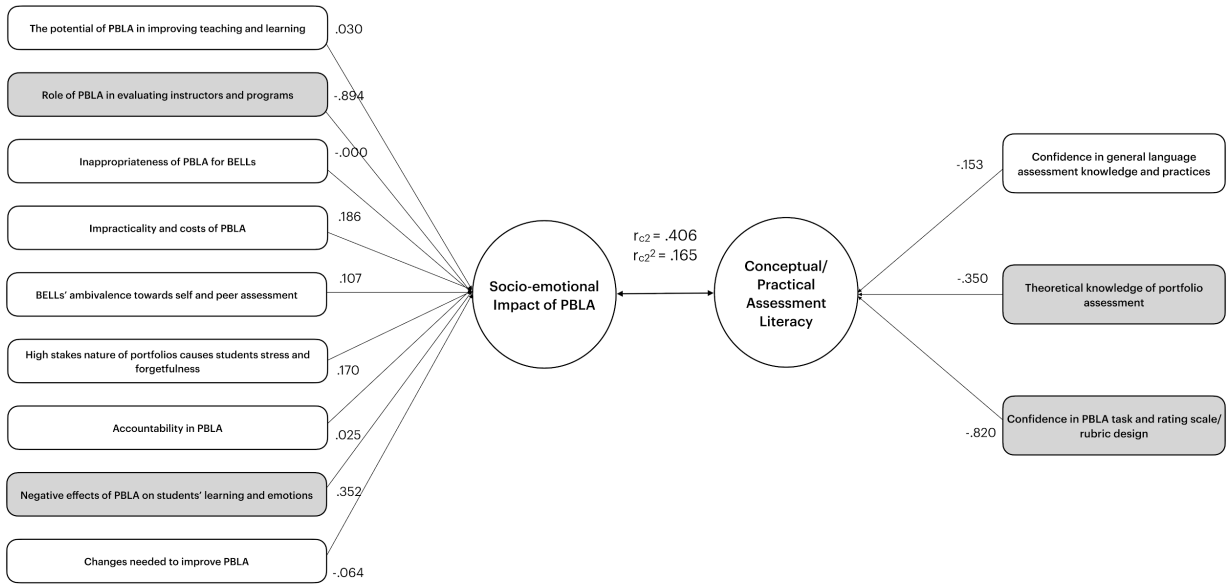
The second significant canonical function (see Figure 2) indicated that there were two important contributors to the socio-emotional variate, with the role of PBLA in evaluating instructors and programs having the strongest correlation. These two variables accounted for 45% of the variance in the second socio-emotional canonical variate. Regarding the second canonical conceptual/practical variate, the two variables highlighted in grey on the right together accounted for 40% of the variance, with confidence in PBLA task and rating scale/rubric design being the strongest contributor.

Two-Way ANOVAs

To address RQ2 regarding the effects of lead teacher training and/or a university assessment course on teacher assessment literacy, the results of two-way ANOVAs revealed the following statistically significant differences:

Figure 2

Second Canonical Function



1. between the instructors who had received PBLA lead teacher training and those who had not on the following extracted factor: negative effects of PBLA on students' learning and emotions ($F(1,137) = 7.8$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.054$) (i.e., lead teachers were less likely to report negative effects); and
2. between the instructors who had taken an assessment course in university and those who had not on three factors: those who had taken a course had higher factor scores related to (a) their confidence in general language assessment knowledge and practices ($F(1,151) = 4.6$, $p = .033$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.030$); (b) their theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment ($F(1, 151) = 5.6$, $p = .019$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.036$); and (c) their recognition that the high-stakes nature of PBLA causes students stress and forgetfulness ($F(1, 137) = 4.7$, $p = .032$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.033$).

Interaction Effect Between PBLA Lead Training and University Assessment Course

Our analysis also revealed an interaction effect between PBLA lead teacher training and taking a university assessment course. PBLA lead teacher training plus a university assessment course had a combined effect on the factor "changes needed to improve PBLA" ($F(1, 137) = 5.3$, $p = .023$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.037$).

Discussion

Our findings highlight the need to examine LAL as a more dynamic, situated praxis (Poehner & Inbar-Lourie, 2020) in which the socio-emotional dimension plays an important role. The negative socio-emotional impacts of PBLA on instructors and learners identified in the research literature conducted in the LINC literacy context (Abbott et al., 2021; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020; Fox & Fraser, 2012; Goss Gilroy, 2021; IRCC, 2020; Kawahara & Lent, 2023; Ripley, 2018) warrant a situated, in-depth examination of the connections between the socio-emotional dimension of language teacher assessment literacy and the

conceptual and practical dimensions. Also, given the concerns about the PBLA training model (Desyatova, 2018, 2020) and the responsibility of PBLA lead teachers in supporting LINC instructors' implementation of PBLA (CCLB, 2019), we focused on these two stakeholder groups (i.e., lead teachers and instructors) and examined the effects of on-the-job training and university assessment education on their assessment literacy. In this section, we discuss our findings in relation to these connections and the situatedness of assessment literacy in LINC.

LINC Literacy Lead Teachers' and Instructors' Perceptions of Socio-Emotional Aspects of PBLA and Their Conceptual/Practical Assessment Literacy

The results of our canonical correlation analysis indicate that the lead teachers' and instructors' perceptions of the socio-emotional impact of PBLA were strongly associated with their conceptual/practical assessment literacy. This finding supports Pastore and Andrade's (2019) argument that the dimensions of teacher assessment literacy are highly interrelated. Overall, our results revealed that conceptual and practical aspects of the LINC literacy lead teachers' and instructors' assessment literacy were strongly related to their perceptions of (a) the socio-emotional impact and appropriateness of PBLA for beginning ESL literacy learners, (b) PBLA being impractical and costly in the LINC literacy context, and (c) the inappropriateness of using PBLA as an accountability measure for evaluating teachers and programs. More specifically, the lead teachers' and instructors' perceptions of the potential socio-emotional benefits of PBLA and the actual shortcomings of PBLA when implemented with beginning ESL literacy learners was strongly associated with their theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment. The lead teachers and instructors with higher levels of theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment recognized the potential of PBLA in language teaching and learning but viewed the current uses of PBLA as inappropriate, impractical, overly focused on accountability, and negatively impacting students' learning and emotions, which researchers (e.g., Abbott et al., 2021) have identified as shortcomings of PBLA in the LINC literacy context. Other researchers have also found that teachers "may have knowledge, and have confidence, but not believe that assessment processes are effective" (Looney et al., 2018, p. 455).

Our results also suggest that lead teachers and instructors with greater confidence in their ability to design and conduct PBLA assessments were less likely to perceive that the purpose of PBLA is to evaluate instructors and LINC program quality. The reason for this finding is unclear, especially considering that two of the main purposes of PBLA from the funder's perspective are "to identify areas for improvement" in LINC (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2010, p. xi) and "to measure the impact of LINC" (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2013, paras. 2–3). While teachers' confidence in their assessment ability is indicative of conceptual and practical assessment literacy (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; DeLuca et al., 2013), it may be possible that the lead teachers and instructors in our study were generally not concerned with assessment policy issues, similar to the language teachers in Kremmel and Harding (2020) who indicated that they did not need to be highly knowledgeable about assessment policy. However, our findings support the argument that all teachers must attend to "the power of policy and context" (Deneen & Brown, 2016, p. 8), as these policies are part of the situated assessment praxis (Poehner & Inbar-Lourie, 2020) that can significantly impact socio-emotional aspects of assessment.

Effects of PBLA Lead Teacher Training and/or a University-Level Assessment Course on Aspects of LINC Literacy Instructors' Assessment Literacy

On-the-Job Lead Teacher Training and Assessment Literacy

Although some researchers (e.g., Vogt & Tsagari, 2014) have found that on-the-job training contributes to the development of language teacher assessment literacy, in our study, on-the-job lead teacher training appeared to negatively impact the social-emotional dimension of LINC literacy instructors' assessment literacy: those instructors who had lead teacher training (a type of on-the-job training) were less likely to recognize the negative effects of PBLA on literacy learners' learning and emotions that have been reported in the PBLA research literature (e.g., Abbott & Lee, 2023a, 2023b). We speculate that this finding may be attributable to (a) the effect of the on-the-job lead-teacher training provided by the CCLB, which is funded by the federal government, and (b) the fact that both the CCLB and the government have a vested interest in the survival of PBLA. The lead teachers' diminished sensitivity to the negative socio-emotional impacts of PBLA may also be related to their role in LINC, which is to support the successful implementation of PBLA, even with literacy learners who are learning to read and write for the first time in any language and as a result are not yet able to read most of the PBLA protocol materials, including the print-based assessment rubrics, task inventories, and checklists (Abbott & Lee, 2023b). This finding supports the view that assessment literacy is shaped by socio-contextual factors (e.g., Coombs & Deluca, 2022) such as teachers' positions within a school system (e.g., leadership roles and associated training), which can influence their interpretations and enactments of assessment policy (T. D. Brown et al., 2024; Looney et al., 2018). In our study, it appeared that given their lead teacher training and role, they needed to ensure the success of PBLA without critically evaluating its validity for use with literacy learners.

A University Assessment Course and Assessment Literacy

Our findings also suggest that taking a university assessment course contributed to the lead teachers' and instructors' theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment, confidence in their assessment knowledge and practices, and recognition of the negative washback due to the high-stakes nature of PBLA (i.e., factor 6 from the socio-emotional subscale: high-stakes nature causes stress and forgetfulness). It is likely that university assessment education enhanced the lead teachers' and instructors' "capacity to ask and answer critical questions" (Inbar-Lourie, 2008, p. 389) about assessment, for example, regarding the usefulness of portfolios in second language assessment (Abrar-ul-Hassan et al., 2021), and especially concerning the appropriateness of PBLA portfolios as the sole form of assessment in LINC (Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020). Deluca and colleagues (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; DeLuca et al., 2013) also found positive effects of university assessment education on aspects of teacher assessment literacy, specifically the fact that it increased pre-service teachers' confidence in formative assessment (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; DeLuca et al., 2013) and their awareness of assessment as a multifaceted interpretive process that is much more complex than a superficial understanding of summative testing (DeLuca et al., 2013). In our study, the effect of a university assessment course on lead teachers' and instructors' recognition of washback on learners may be partially attributable to their increased understanding of consequential validity (Messick, 1996), a concept typically covered in assessment courses and language assessment textbooks (e.g., H. D. Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Green, 2021). Taking a university assessment course likely raised their awareness of the potential unintended socio-emotional consequences of assessment and their ability to recognize the impacts of these consequences on students.

Although other researchers who have examined the effects of PBLA on teaching and learning in LINC (e.g., Abbott & Lee, 2023b; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020) did not focus on the effects of university

assessment education on lead teachers' and instructors' assessment literacy, a recurrent finding in the literature on PBLA has been that the high-stakes nature of PBLA produces unintended socio-emotional consequences. For example, Abbott and Lee (2023b) found that because PBLA results are used to make LINC level advancement decisions and serve as an indicator of language proficiency for citizenship applications, literacy learners experience higher levels of stress and dread than the first language literate learners in the general LINC stream. In Abdulhamid and Fox's (2020) study of PBLA, the instructors also reported negative washback effects of PBLA, including the following: causing learners stress and confusion, learners cheating, instructors teaching to the test, and learners using PBLA results to compare who is "smarter" or "dumber" (p. 183). These findings led the authors to echo Coombe et al.'s (2012) recommendation that university assessment courses be required in language teacher education programs and for L2 and foreign English language teacher certification so that instructors would be better equipped to understand and address negative washback in LINC. Our results provide support for this recommendation, as they suggest that lead teachers and instructors with university assessment education have greater awareness of the unintended socio-emotional consequences of the high-stakes nature of PBLA, which is encompassed in the socio-emotional dimension of assessment literacy (Pastore & Andrade, 2019).

On-the-Job Lead Teacher Training, a University Assessment Course, and Assessment Literacy

Regarding the effects of on-the-job lead teacher training and a university assessment course, those lead teachers who had taken a university assessment course were the least likely to perceive that changes to PBLA were needed to improve PBLA in terms of instructor training and the use of assessment results. This perception is at odds with the calls for improvements to PBLA by L2 assessment experts such as Abdulhamid and Fox (2020) and suggests that lead teachers with university assessment education view the train-the-trainer model in a more favourable light than the instructors in previous research (Desyatova, 2018, 2020), who were highly critical of the PBLA training model. Because the lead teachers are responsible for training other instructors in the PBLA protocol, this finding is not entirely unexpected. Given their university education in assessment coupled with their specialized training as lead teachers, they likely feel prepared to deliver quality training, supporting Inbar-Lourie's (2017) argument that assessment literacy may fluctuate depending on the assessment context.

Implications for Stakeholders and LINC Policies

Findings from our study may be used to inform LINC stakeholders' (i.e., lead teacher, instructor, policymaker) assessment education and training as well as national LINC policies. Implications for both pre- and in-service teacher education that have the potential to improve teacher assessment literacy include developing all aspects of assessment literacy so they (a) are sensitized to the socio-emotional issues associated with assessment, (b) have the confidence to question policies and mandated assessment practices that may have a negative impact on teaching and learning, and (c) are more likely to effect positive changes to policy and practice by sharing their language assessment literacy with other stakeholders. Completing a university-level language assessment course constitutes an important avenue for developing assessment literacy.

Our findings also have important implications for the macro-level government-mandated assessment system in LINC as well as the PBLA on-the-job training model. Given the unstandardized nature of PBLA (i.e., the assessment tasks are designed by the teacher so they differ from class to class, even at the same CLB level), PBLA results should not be used as the only measure for making high-stakes decisions or for evaluating teachers and programs (Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020), yet PBLA results continue to be used for these purposes, and the lead teachers who are tasked with training others appear more

willing to accept the status quo. The inappropriate use of PBLA results is ultimately a matter related to policy, which is an important part of situated assessment praxis (Poehner & Inbar-Louie, 2020). As such, our findings highlight the need to also attend to the assessment literacy of policymakers employed at the CCLB and in the federal government (e.g., IRCC) who have the power to effect changes to the PBLA protocol, training, and uses of PBLA results.

By providing information and resources that target common areas of confusion regarding the appropriateness of different forms of assessment and assessment results, and making this information easily accessible, LINC stakeholders may increase their assessment literacy and be able to better understand that PBLA results should be used to inform instruction and learning, rather than being used to evaluate instructors and programs. In particular, assessment education is needed to raise stakeholders' awareness of the socio-emotional dimension of assessment so they can recognize the negative socio-emotional impacts of this national assessment system that have been well documented in the PBLA research literature as not addressing adult ESL literacy learners' needs (Abbott et al., 2021; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020; Fox & Fraser, 2012; Goss Gilroy, 2021; IRCC, 2020; Kawahara & Lent, 2023; Ripley, 2018). By fostering the development of the three dimensions of assessment literacy (conceptual, practical, socio-emotional) in all stakeholder groups, the assessment system could be improved so as to optimize assessment for learning and promote student and instructor well-being in LINC literacy.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The main limitations of our study are inherent in most survey research and provide directions for future research. Given the exploratory nature of our study, we collected self-report data from a self-selected sample, which may have led to biased results as the respondents may not have interpreted the items in the same way, and those who responded may not be representative of the entire population of LINC literacy lead teachers and instructors across Canada; however, in an attempt to minimize response bias, we extensively piloted and revised the questionnaire, and we received responses from lead teachers and instructors working in all provinces where LINC ESL literacy classes are offered. Furthermore, due to our focus on socio-emotional aspects of assessment and to maximize the likelihood of survey completion given LINC instructors' heavy workload caused by PBLA, we included 42 items in the socio-emotional subscale versus 13 conceptual/practical items which captured only key aspects of conceptual/practical assessment literacy. In addition, although the number of respondents was sizable, future quantitative research with additional respondents would be useful to corroborate the factor structure of the instrument. Qualitative research could also be conducted to develop a deeper understanding of the influence of contextual and sociocultural variables on assessment literacy across stakeholder groups. Another avenue of research would be to examine the correspondence between self-reported measures of assessment literacy and direct measures of the assessment practices.

Further research is also needed to reconcile the differing views of PBLA instructor training among lead teacher and instructor stakeholder groups who have varying profiles of assessment literacy given their on-the-job training and education. Our findings also highlight the need for research that investigates (a) how mandated assessment policies, such as PBLA, impact the need for stakeholder assessment literacy, (b) which aspects of assessment literacy are required by the various stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, lead teachers, administrators, policymakers, etc.), and (c) effective pathways for developing stakeholder assessment literacy that would contribute to effective assessment systems that prioritize learning. Furthermore, an examination of ESL literacy learners' assessment literacy could inform a more learner-centred approach to assessment in LINC, including how to promote the development of learner assessment literacy over time. Because literacy learners are learning to read and write for the first time in any language, the assessment system needs to consider the literacy learners' levels of L2 literacy and how L2 literacy

affects their understanding of L2 assessment, L2 assessment practices, and the socio-emotional impacts of L2 assessment.

Conclusion

Our study, which responds to the call for contextualized research on assessment literacy (e.g., Levi & Inbar-Lourie, 2020; Vogt et al., 2020), addresses the need for research to better understand the interrelated dimensions of teacher assessment literacy across stakeholder groups and the influence of contextual factors that impact the assessment of ESL literacy learners in LINC. This study connects these avenues of inquiry through an examination of lead teachers' and literacy instructors' perceptions of socio-emotional aspects related to the purposes and uses of PBLA, given their conceptual and practical assessment literacy, education, and on-the-job PBLA training.

Results from our situated examination of lead teacher and instructor assessment literacy in LINC provide support for the conceptualization of assessment literacy as a complex construct with multiple interrelated dimensions (Pastore & Andrade, 2019), as well as the argument that different stakeholder groups have different assessment literacy profiles that are shaped by contextual factors (Kremmel & Harding, 2020; Taylor, 2013). In line with prior research that showed an influence of university education in assessment (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; DeLuca et al., 2013) and on-the-job training (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014) on teacher assessment literacy, we found impacts of both university assessment education and on-the-job training on lead teachers' and instructors' assessment literacy. University assessment education contributed to their theoretical knowledge of portfolio assessment, confidence in their assessment knowledge and practices, and recognition of the negative washback due to the high-stakes nature of PBLA. However, the effect of on-the-job training was not entirely expected: on-the-job lead teacher training appeared to influence socio-emotional aspects of assessment literacy in that those who received this training (and then became lead teachers) were less likely to recognize some of the negative washback effects of PBLA reported in the research literature (e.g., Abbott & Lee, 2023b; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020). This finding highlights the need for research-informed assessment education and training that strengthen stakeholders' sensitivity to the socio-emotional dimension, particularly for LINC lead teachers and policymakers, given that these two stakeholder groups are responsible for developing and delivering on-the-job assessment training. Building assessment literacy across all stakeholder groups has the potential to address the challenges of PBLA and unlock the formative potential of portfolio assessment for adult ESL learners who are acquiring literacy skills for the first time in any language.

The Authors

Marilyn L. Abbott is a professor in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. She has been a principal and co-investigator on several large research projects that have been funded federally in Canada and the United States, provincially, and locally. Her career as a practitioner, teacher educator, and researcher in the field of TESL spans over three decades. As a researcher, she is interested in finding ways to support teachers in improving the teaching, learning, and assessment of English language learners.

Kent K. Lee is an associate professor in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. He has been an educator in a variety of contexts, including K–12 and adult education. He is an active member of the local TESL community, where he volunteers on various boards and committees and participates regularly in professional learning and development

events. In his role as a researcher, Kent holds a pragmatic worldview, values partnerships with teachers, and employs a variety of research methodologies to address complex, practical issues in TESL.

References

Abbott, M. L., & Lee, K. K. (2023a). Relationships between students' emotions, self-regulated learning, and literacy gains in beginning/basic level ESL literacy classes for adults. *System, 115*, Article 103061. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103061

Abbott, M. L., & Lee, K. K. (2023b). Comparing LESLLA and non-LESLLA learners' emotions associated with portfolio-based language assessment. *LESLLA Symposium Proceedings, 18*(1), 19–37. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10119256

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, 24*(2), 260–285. https://doi.org/10.37213/cjal.2021.31338

Abdulhamid, N., & Fox, J. (2020). Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs: Taking stock of teachers' experience. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 23*(2), 168–192. https://doi.org/10.37213/cjal.2020.31121

Abrar-ul-Hassan, S., Douglas, D., & Turner, J. (2021). Revisiting second language portfolio assessment in a new age. *System, 103,* Article 102652. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102652

Abrar-ul-Hassan, S., & Nassaji, H. (2024). Rescoping language assessment literacy: An expanded perspective. *System, 120,* Article 103195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103195

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (n.d.). *Alignment of the ACTFL proficiency ratings to the Canadian language benchmarks (CLB)* [White paper]. ACTFL. https://www.languagetesting.com/pub/media/wysiwyg/research/white_papers/Alignment_of_the_ACTFL_Proficiency_Ratings_to_the_CLB_D7.pdf

Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2019). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices* (3rd ed.). Pearson.

Brown, T. D., Barnes, M., & Finefter-Rosenbluh, I. (2024). Teacher perspectives and experiences of assessment literacy in Victorian junior secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Education*, *68*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/00049441231214022

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB). (2019). *PBLA practice guidelines.* https://pblapg.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/PBLA-Practice-Guidelines-2019_978-1-897100-78-3-RA.pdf

Chan, C. K. Y., & Luk, L. Y. Y. (2022). A four-dimensional framework for teacher assessment literacy in holistic competencies. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 47*(5), 755–769. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1962806

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2010, March). *Evaluation of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program*. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/resources/evaluation/linc/2010/linc-eval.pdf

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2013, March 15). *Settlement program—Introducing Portfolio-Based Language Assessment as a standard feature of LINC and CLIC* (Operational Bulletin 510). https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/bulletins-2013/510-march-15-2013.html

Coombe, C., Troudi, S., & Al-Hamly, M. (2012). Foreign and second language teacher assessment literacy: Issues, challenges, and recommendations. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment* (pp. 20–29). Cambridge.

Coombs, A., & Deluca, C. (2022). Mapping the constellation of assessment discourses: A scoping review study on assessment competence, literacy, capability, and identity. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 34,* 279–301. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-022-09389-9

Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Davies, A. (2008). Textbook trends in teaching language testing. *Language Testing, 25*(3), 327–347. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090156

DeLuca, C., Chavez, T., & Cao, C. (2013). Establishing a foundation for valid teacher judgement on student learning: The role of pre-service assessment education. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 20*(1), 107–126. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2012.668870

DeLuca, C., & Klinger, D. A. (2010). Assessment literacy development: Identifying gaps in teacher candidates' learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 17*(4), 419–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2010.516643

Deneen, C. C., & Brown, G. T. L. (2016). The impact of conceptions of assessment on assessment literacy in a teacher education program. *Cogent Education, 3*(1), Article 1225380. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1225380

Desyatova, Y. (2018). "Battling the piñata and swallowing camels": Teachers learn to PBLA in the absence of dialogic interaction. *TESL Canada Journal, 35*(2), 51–77. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v35i2.1290

Desyatova, Y. (2020). When inquiry is seen as resistance to change: Expert teachers' experiences with the implementation of portfolio-based language assessment (PBLA). *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 17*(1), 42–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2020.1713788

Deygers, B., & Malone, M. E. (2019). Language assessment literacy in university admission policies, or the dialogue that isn't. *Language Testing, 36*(3), 347–368. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532219826390

Fox, J., & Fraser, W. (2012). *Report on the impact of the implementation of PBLA on LINC teachers and students from September to December 2011*. [Internal technical report submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, January 12].

Fulcher, G., & Davdison, F. (2007). *Language testing and assessment: An advanced resource book.* Routledge.

Gan, L., & Lam, R. (2022). A review on language assessment literacy: Trends, foci and contributions. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 19*(5), 503–525. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2022.2128802

Goss Gilroy. (2021). *Evaluation of the portfolio based language assessment (PBLA): Final report.* Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks. https://www.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PBLA-Evaluation-Final-Report-17-Mar-2021_FINAL.pdf

Government of Canada. (2024a). *Language classes funded by the Government of Canada.* Accessed May 15, 2024 from ,https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/improve-english-french/classes.html

Government of Canada. (2024b). *Apply for citizenship: Who can apply.* Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Accessed May 23, 2024, from https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/become-canadian-citizen/eligibility.html

Green, A. (2021). *Exploring language assessment and testing language in action* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Holmes, T. (2015). PBLA: Moving toward sustainability. *TESL Canada Journal, 32*(9), 113–123. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v32i0.1220

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). (2020). *Evaluation of language training services.* https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/eval-language-training-services.html

Inbar-Lourie, O. (2008). Constructing a language assessment knowledge base: A focus on language assessment courses. *Language Testing, 25*(3), 385–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090158

Inbar-Lourie, O. (2017). Language assessment literacy. In E. Shohamy, I. Or, & S. May (Eds.), *Language testing and assessment* (pp. 257–270). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02261-1_19

Kalkbrenner, M. T. (2023). Alpha, omega, and *H* internal consistency reliability estimates: Reviewing these options and when to use them. *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, 14*(1), 77–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/21501378.2021.1940118

Kawahara, S., & Lent, V. (2023). *Evaluation of the use of PBLA with literacy learners research.* Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. https://www.language.ca/evaluation-pbla-literacy-learners/

Kremmel, B., & Harding, L. (2020). Towards a comprehensive, empirical model of language assessment literacy across stakeholder groups: Developing the language assessment literacy survey. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 17*(1), 100–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2019.1674855

Lam, R. (2019). Teacher assessment literacy: Surveying knowledge, conceptions and practices of classroom-based writing assessment in Hong Kong. *System, 81*, 78–89. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.01.006

Levi, T., & Inbar-Lourie, O. (2020). Assessment literacy or language assessment literacy: Learning from the teachers. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 17*(2), 168–182. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2019.1692347

Lewkowicz, J., & Leung, C. (2021). Classroom-based assessment. *Language Teaching, 54*(1), 47–57. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000506

Looney, A., Cumming, J., van Der Kleij, F, & Harris, K. (2018). Reconceptualising the role of teachers as assessors: Teacher assessment identity. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, *25*(5), 442–467. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2016.1268090

McNeish, D. (2018). Thanks coefficient alpha, we'll take it from here. *Psychological Methods, 23*(3), 412–433. https://doi.org/10.1037/met0000144

Messick, S. (1996). Validity and washback in language testing. *Language Testing, 13*(3), 239–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300302

North, B., & Piccardo, E. (2023). Aligning language frameworks: An example with the CLB and CEFR. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 20*(2), 143–165. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2023.2184266

Pastore, S. (2023). Teacher assessment literacy: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Education, 8,* Article 1217167. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1217167

Pastore, S., & Andrade, H. L. (2019). Teacher assessment literacy: A three-dimensional model. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 84,* 128–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.05.003

Pellegrino, J. (2020). Important considerations for assessment to function in the service of education. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 39*(3), 81–85. https://doi.org/10.1111/emip.12372

Pettis, J. (2014). Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA): Guide for teachers and programs. Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://listn.tutela.ca/wp-content/uploads/PBLA_Guide_2014.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjK_d3vyLSRAxVlODQIHTpzM_cQFnoECBcQAQ&usg=AOvVaw17FVuCcxDU0owLw7y_CoR5

Poehner, M. E., & Inbar-Lourie, O. (2020). An epistemology of action for understanding and change in L2 classroom assessment: The case for praxis. In M. E. Poehner & O. Inbar-Lourie (Eds.), *Toward a reconceptualization of second language classroom assessment. Praxis and researcher-teacher partnership* (pp. 1–20). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35081-9_1

Ripley, D. (2018, winter). PBLA from the bottom up: LINC instructors share the benefits and challenges of portfolios. *BC TEAL News,* 16–18. https://bcteal.org/docs/TEAL-News-Winter-2018-FINAL-2.pdf
Roslan, R., Nishio, Y., & Jawawi, R. (2022). Analyzing English language teacher candidates' assessment literacy: A case of Bruneian and Japanese universities. *System, 111,* Article 102934. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102934
Su, X., & Lee, I. (2024). Is the magic in the mix? The development and validation of the L2 teachers' blended assessment literacy scale. *System, 123,* Article 103354. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103354
Sun, H., & Zhang, J. (2022). Assessment literacy of college EFL teachers in China: Status quo and mediating factors. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 74,* Article 101157. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2022.101157
Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2019). *Using multivariate statistics* (7th ed.). Pearson.
Taylor, L. (2013). Communicating the theory, practice and principles of language testing to test stakeholders: Some reflections. *Language Testing, 30*(3), 403–412. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480338
Tian, W., Louw, S., & Khan, M. K. (2021). Covid-19 as a critical incident: Reflection on language assessment literacy and the need for radical changes. *System, 103,* Article 102682. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102682
Vogt, K., & Tsagari, D. (2014). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers: Findings of a European study. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 11*(4), 374–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2014.960046
Vogt, K., & Tsagari, D. (2022). Language assessment literacy and test validation: Highlighting the role of language teachers. *Studies in Language Assessment, 11*(1), 1–15. https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/4282557/SiLA-11.1-Vogt_and_Tsagari.pdf
Vogt, K., Tsagari, D., Csépes, I., Green, A., & Sifakis, N. (2020). Linking learners' perspectives on language assessment practices to Teachers' Assessment Literacy Enhancement (TALE): Insights from four European countries. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 17*(4), 410–433. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2020.1776714
Xerri, D., & Vella Briffa, P. (Eds.). (2018). *Teacher involvement in high-stakes language testing*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77177-9
Xu, Y., & Brown, G. T. L. (2016). Teacher assessment literacy in practice: A reconceptualization. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 58,* 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.010

Appendix

Questionnaire Items (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

Socio-Emotional Subscale (42 items)

1) PBLA positively affects students' learning.
2) PBLA results have a positive effect on students' self-concepts.
3) PBLA negatively affects students' stress levels.
4) PBLA motivates students to work harder.
5) PBLA increases learner autonomy.
6) PBLA promotes positive student-teacher relationships.
7) My students view PBLA results as high-stakes.
8) My students like having their PBLA tasks evaluated by their teacher.
9) My students like evaluating their own PBLA tasks.

10) My students like evaluating their peers' PBLA tasks.
11) My students can reflect on their own learning.
12) My students understand the purpose of PBLA.
13) My students can identify what is good about their work.
14) My students can identify what needs to be improved in their work.
15) My students use the PBLA feedback I provide to improve their performance on future tasks.
16) My students memorize language for PBLA tasks that is quickly forgotten.
17) PBLA makes me feel pressured.
18) PBLA makes me spend too much time coaching students how to take assessments.
19) PBLA makes me give too many graded assessments.
20) PBLA makes me spend too much time on assessment-related activities.
21) PBLA has positively impacted the quality of my assessments.

The Purpose of PBLA is

22) to formally document growth in learning.
23) to inform stakeholders about the performance of the LINC program (accountability).
24) to provide "hard" data to be used to provide a system-wide check at the national level.
25) to evaluate/judge the quality of instructors.
26) to evaluate/judge the quality of programs.
27) to assist programs in improving student learning.
28) to plan my instruction.
29) to improve and enhance my teaching/instruction.
30) to motivate students to learn.
31) to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my students.
32) to compare my class' results with the results of other classes in my program.
33) to compare my class' results with the results in Canada.
34) to standardize assessment practices in all LINC programs.
35) PBLA results provide useful information.
36) PBLA results are not being used appropriately.
37) There is a lack of attention to resolving instructors' concerns with PBLA.
38) PBLA is costly in terms of preparation time.
39) PBLA is costly in terms of administrative time.
40) In terms of instruction, PBLA takes up more time and effort than it is worth.
41) PBLA results promote program improvements.
42) Training in the use of information generated by PBLA should be improved.

Conceptual/Practical Assessment Literacy Subscale (13 items)

43) I am confident in my ability to design high-quality PBLA tasks.
44) I am confident in my ability to design high-quality PBLA rating scales/rubrics.
45) I am confident that the PBLA tasks I create are level-appropriate.
46) I am confident that the PBLA tasks I create simulate authentic contexts.
47) I am confident in my ability to reliably grade speaking and writing tasks.
48) I am confident in my ability to reliably grade listening and reading tasks.
49) I am confident in my ability to provide high-quality written feedback to students on their tasks.
50) I am confident in my ability to communicate assessment results to students.
51) I am knowledgeable of the main principles of assessment.
52) I am able to write measurable objectives.
53) The ranking of LINC programs according to PBLA results is wrong.
54) The PBLA portfolio is a standardized evaluation portfolio.
55) The PBLA portfolio is a working portfolio.