

APPENDIX A

Template for preparing a CLB assessment

1. Research Canadian Language Benchmarks

Read everything available on CLBs and assessment.

Suggested Resources:

- a. Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000
- b. Companion Tables to the CLB 2000
- c. CLB 2000: Additional Sample Task ideas
- d. Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills
- e. Workplace English Language Proficiency Assessment
 - Bow Valley College
- f. On Target
 - Bow Valley College
- g. Integrating CLB assessment into your ESL classroom
 - Tara Holmes

2. Develop a test specification document¹

This represents a generative blueprint from which tasks are drawn. The specification document provides specific information on what a learner can do and creates the opportunity for higher level dialogue among your test review.

The test specification document should include:

- A general description: What skills are being tested?
- Why are we testing these learners?
- What is their expected level?
- For what will the test be used?

- a. Prompt attributes: What will be given to the students?
 - Instructions
 - Performance conditions
 - Test items
- b. Response attributes: How will the students respond?
- c. Sample items – to give a “face” to the theory.
- d. The test specification should not be too long or too detailed. This document will drive the test. See appendix B for the Reading & Writing test specification document.

¹ Davidson F. and Lynch B. (2002) *Testcraft*: Yale University, New Haven and London.

3. Form your test team

Davidson describes a process of test writing which is “iterative, consensus-based, specifications-driven”. Appendix C represents the NorQuest College test team and demonstrates the diversity of experience and expertise required to drive effective feedback. Using the test specification document will lead to cycles of feedback and an original roadmap to which to compare the iterations of the test.

4. Generate feedback from:

- the test team
- small scale pilots
- larger pilots
- external reviewers

5. At all stages ask your test team:

- Are we measuring what we purport to measure?
- Is the congruent with the CLBs?
- Is the test fair to the test takers?
- How can we ensure that instructors are involved in giving meaningful feedback on the test without incurring the unintended effect of teaching to the test subsequent to having been involved in its development?

Appendix B Sample of Test Specification CLB 7 Content-based Exit Test ~ Reading & Writing

Introduction to the Test Specification format

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the test development team for this CLB 7 content-based exit test ~ Reading & Writing.

As part of our mandate, we are attempting to not only create an exit testing tool for our students but to develop a template for other groups who have a need to write their own content specific CLB exit tests. We will therefore be strongly focused on the *process* of test development in our approach to and reporting of this project. The framework for the test development will follow an established language testing methodology (Davidson & Lynch, 2002, Popham, 1994) which is intended to be, “iterative, consensus-based, [and] specification driven.” The cycles of feedback and a team approach aim to construct a better test. The first stage of this feedback process is to present you with a Test Specification document. This is a blueprint for how we intend to proceed. It includes a general description, specific learning objectives related to CLB 7 and the English for Careers curriculum, sample items. Furthermore, the sample items include prompts and responses. This test specification is not intended to be fully comprehensive, nor does it contain rubrics or text examples.

I look forward to your feedback,

Justine Light
Test Developer

CLB 7 Content-based Exit test ~ Reading & Writing

Test specification

The purpose of this test specification is to provide a working blueprint for the CLB 7 content-based exit test under development in the ESL Intensive program.

General description

The objectives of this test are to test a range of CLB 7 performance indicators, alongside the content of the English for Careers course which includes units on workplace culture and communication, safety in the workplace, and conflict resolution in the workplace. In order to improve the opportunities of immigrants to integrate in the workplace it is necessary to provide them with the skills and knowledge that will make them successful in the workplace – able to attain employment, retain it and be eligible for advancement. In order to improve access to employment and employment training, this tests aims to ascertain that learners have acquired a particular skills set and a body of knowledge relating to the Canadian workplace that would qualify them.

This test is designed for:

- ESL learners at CLB 6/7 who intend to enter the workplace or career preparation and are currently studying in the English for Careers at NorQuest College
- ESL learners applying for employment requiring CLB 7 and some knowledge of workplace practices, safety rules, and workplace culture.
- Career preparation bridging programs requiring CLB 7 for entry, and
- Employers wishing to hire immigrant workers with demonstrated competencies at CLB 7.

Specific Learning Outcomes Overview: CLB 7 and English for Careers

The specific learning outcomes of the English for Careers curriculum which will be included in this test are as follows:

Reading

- R1. Identify specific factual information, the main idea and key details, and inferred meaning
- R2. Use pre-reading strategies to make predictions about a text
- R3. Scan to find specific details or words
- R4. Summarize a description or report
- R5. Interpret information from lists, diagrams, graphs, tables and charts

Writing

- W1. Use standard expressions and appropriate levels of formality
- W2. Write work documents such as business letters and emails
- W3. Fill out forms

- W4. Demonstrate good use of most complex structures, spelling and punctuation
W5. Write two-three paragraphs to narrate a familiar sequence of events

Reading Section 1

Performance conditions:

- Text will be one or two pages long related to familiar workplace context.
- Language is concrete and abstract, conceptual and technical.

Specific outcomes:

- Students will use pre-reading strategies to make predictions about a text.
- Students will scan to find specific details or words.

Sample item

Using the headline, sub heading, photograph and first paragraph of this newspaper article, write one sentence predicting the main idea of the whole article.

Requirements for the selection of the text include the following characteristics:

- A topic that is workplace related
- A topic that parallels the topics covered in the EFC curriculum
- A style of writing that mirrors the formality and complexity of those in the EFC course.

Prompt attribute:

Students will be assigned a partial newspaper text as described above and asked to predict the subject of the article. Responses will be rated on the extent to which the student is able to coherently articulate the main idea of the article.

For example, a student who reads an article where the main idea is appropriate dress for casual Fridays may provide one of the following responses:

- The main idea is about the workplace.
- The main idea of this article is going to be about clothing.
- Workplace clothing is the main idea of the article.
- Appropriate business clothing must be the topic of this newspaper article.
- The main topic of this newspaper article will be about appropriate clothing for casual Fridays.

Response attribute:

Students will provide a one sentence answer predicting the main idea of the whole article.

Sample item

You have five minutes to read this Labour Market News entry about Job Profiles. Scan through the text as quickly as possible and answer the five True/False questions below.

Requirements for the selection of the text include the following characteristics:

- A topic that is workplace related
- A topic that parallels the topics covered in the EFC curriculum
- A style of writing that mirrors the formality and complexity of those in the EFC course.

Prompt attribute:

Students will be assigned to read a text with a short time limit. students will answer five True/False questions.

Response attribute:

For each question, the students will select the one best answer from the two alternatives presented.

Reading Section 2

Performance conditions:

Text will be one or two pages long related to familiar workplace context. Language is concrete and abstract, conceptual and technical.

Specific Outcomes:

- Students will be asked to identify specific factual information, the main idea and key details, and inferred meaning.
- Students will be asked to summarize a description or report.
- Students will be asked to interpret information from lists, diagrams, graphs, tables and charts.

Sample item

Read the following text and answer the eight multiple choice questions below.

Requirements for the selection of the text include the following characteristics:

- A topic that is workplace related
- A topic that parallels the topics covered in the EFC curriculum
- A style of writing that mirrors the formality and complexity of those on the EFC course

Prompt attribute:

Students will be assigned to read a text and answer eight multiple choice questions about the text. Questions are based on main idea (1), detail (6) and inferred meaning (1).

Response attribute:

For each question, the students will select the one best answer from the four alternatives presented.

Sample item

Read the Alberta HRE Employment Standards Fact Sheet. Then, read the 10 summary points below. From the 10 points, choose the five that you think best summarize the main ideas of the article. Put a check mark next to the five items you think best summarize the article.

Prompt attribute:

After reading the article, students will be presented with 10 items from the text. The student will select the five which represent the summary of the main ideas, and record them on a table/list. The list of 10 points will all be taken from the Fact Sheet. The task for the test taker is to discriminate between those which are details and examples and those which represent the main ideas and so could be used in a summary.

Response attribute:

Students will select the five ideas presented in a list of ten by determining which demonstrate a summary of the main ideas in the Fact Sheet. students will checkmark the ideas.

Sample item

Using statistical reports, such as Canadian Social Trends, students will answer six True/False/NEI questions.

Prompt attribute:

After reading the statistical report, students will be presented with six statements and asked to determine whether the statements are True/False/NEI. The test taker will be required to locate specific information and interpret it in order to conclude whether the statements are True/False/NEI.

Response attribute:

Students circle True/False/NEI after each question.

Writing Section

Performance Conditions:

Text is one to three paragraphs long, on non-personal but familiar topics. Writing ranges from formal to informal occasions. Forms are about 40 items long.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

- Students will write work documents such as business letters, memos, and emails
- Students will fill out forms
- Students will write two-three paragraphs to narrate a familiar sequence of events
- Students will use standard expressions and appropriate levels of formality

- Students will demonstrate good use of most complex structures, spelling and punctuation.

Sample item

Read a workplace conflict scenario. Write an email suggesting conflict resolution strategies to your boss. In doing this, students will:

- Address the writing task
- Present coherent organization
- Demonstrate knowledge of workplace conflict resolution content from EFC
- Use appropriate tone and level of formality
- Demonstrate good use of most complex structures, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary

Prompt attribute:

Students will be assigned a writing task which represents a workplace document and provides the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of workplace conflict resolution. Writing will be rated using a rubric. Two evaluators will grade the email.

Response attribute:

Student will type an email suggesting conflict resolution strategies to his/her boss

Sample item

Watch a video of a workplace accident (twice). Write a one paragraph report of this accident.

In doing this, students will:

- Address the writing task
- Present coherent organization
- Convey essential information to the reader
- Reduce information to the main points
- Use appropriate tone and level of formality
- Demonstrate good use of most complex structures, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary

Prompt attribute:

Students will watch a video of a workplace accident (twice). Students will be assigned a writing task of one paragraph to provide a report of the accident. Writing will be rated using a rubric. Two evaluators will grade the report.

Response attribute:

Students will write one paragraph to produce an accident report.

Sample item

Write a two-three paragraph risk assessment related to the research project undertaken in EFC related to your career. In doing this, students will:

- address the writing task
- Present coherent organization
- Convey essential information to the reader
- Explain the main ideas and support them with details
- Use appropriate tone and level of formality
- Demonstrate good use of most complex structures, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

Prompt attribute:

Students will be assigned a writing task of two-three paragraphs to provide a report risk assessment related to a research project undertaken in EFC and provides the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of workplace safety as studied in the EFC curriculum.

Writing will be rated using a rubric. Two evaluators will grade the email.

Response attribute:

Students will write two-three paragraphs to explain a risk assessment research project undertaken in EFC relating to their own career plans.