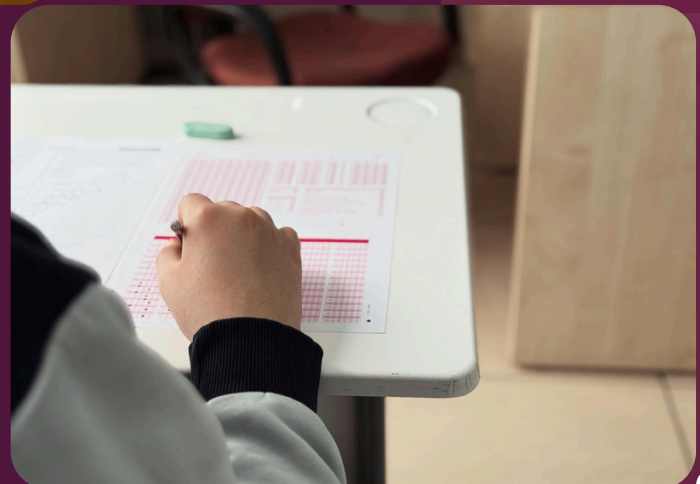
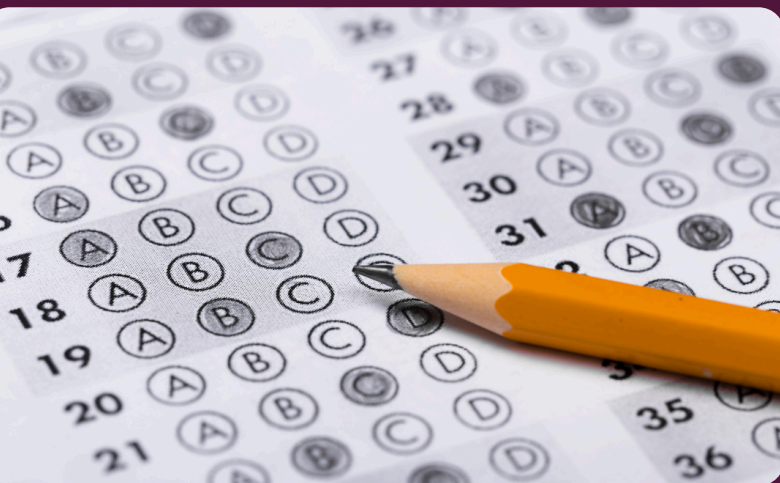


Get SET Practitioner Resource



Exam Preparation: Skills, Strategies and Approaches



Acknowledgements



Prepared by Literacy Link South Central (LLSC)

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Skills, Education and Training



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How to Use This Resource

This resource is designed to have broad applicability for practitioners working in Get SET programs who are supporting learners with exam preparation of many different types. These types of exams include, but are not limited to:

- Certificate of Qualification exam for skilled trade licensing
- Canadian Adult Education Credential tests for high school equivalency
- Mature Student Admission tests for college entrance
- Challenge exams for prior learning assessment
- Academic exams for postsecondary (or other academic) courses
- Industry or sector certification exams

The core skills—multiple-choice question mechanics, study systems, error analysis, pacing, and performance regulation — transfer across all exam types. You can adjust the examples and practice materials to match the type of exam that the learner is planning to write.

The resource is organized in four parts:



Sample Intake Process and Assessments



Sample Learner Plan



Suggested Resources for Developing Exam Preparation Activities



Multiple-Choice Exams: A Sample Approach for Preparation





SECTION 1:

Sample Intake Process and Assessments

Introduction for Assessors

There are many different exams and tests that Get SET learners may need to prepare for, depending on their goal path and goal. Some of these exams include the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC - formerly GED), Mature Student Admission tests for college, the Certificate of Qualification for apprenticeship, and more.

This resource contains sample intake assessments intended for learners who are joining your program specifically to improve their exam preparation and test-taking skills, no matter which type of exam they are preparing for.

The sample exam preparation intake assessments include:

- A) Guiding Questions for the Intake Interview
- B) Sample Writing Assessment
- C) Sample Writing Assessment
- D) Sample Self-Assessment



Reading and Writing Assessments

If a learner interested in exam preparation activities is already in your program, they will likely already have reading and/or writing intake assessments on file.

However, new learners who wish to register with your program only to improve their exam preparation/test-taking skills will still need to be assessed for Get SET eligibility at intake, i.e. they must assess at less than the end of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) level 3 in at least one of Competency A - Find and Use Information, Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information, or Competency C - Understand and Use Numbers.

You may want to administer your existing intake assessments for reading and/or writing to new exam preparation learners. Alternatively, you may want to use the short reading and/or writing assessments included in this resource. Note that the reading assessment provides three different reading samples. Learners are not expected to do all three; you can select from the options provided and adjust the instructions as needed.

Note: a numeracy assessment is not included in this resource because exam preparation learning activities are intended to focus on study skills, test-taking skills, etc., not on subject specific skills or the content of the exam itself.



Exam Preparation Self-assessment

The self-assessment is a checklist. It is divided into five sections including skills, behaviours, and attitudes that relate to exam preparation and test-taking skills. The five sections are as follows:

- Studying for an exam
- Writing an exam
- Personal situation
- Attitudes and concerns
- Symptoms and feelings during an exam

Learners should be encouraged to complete all sections, but if they don't feel comfortable responding to some items, they can omit as they see fit.

Note: Section 4 of this resource includes an alternate version of a self-assessment tool.



Interpreting the Self-assessment

The self-assessment intentionally does not provide a score. The primary purpose of the self-assessment is to identify the skills and behaviours the learner would like to focus on during their exam preparation learning activities.

Practitioners may want to relate the self-assessment results to the OALCF Competency E - Manage Learning in developing the learner plan. An overview of a learner plan related to exam preparation is included in Section 2 of this resource.

Indicator Overview	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Competency E Manage learning (no task groups)	E1 Set short-term goals, begin to use limited learning strategies, and begin to monitor own learning	E2 Write texts to explain and describe information and ideas	E3 Write longer texts to present information, ideas and opinions

The complete [OALCF Curriculum Framework](#) is also available for reference.



Guiding Questions for the Intake Interview

The purpose of these questions is to gather key information about the exam for which the learner is preparing. The learner may or may not have all of the information at hand, in which case they should consult the official exam administration details that are available to them.

- Exam name and type (e.g., Certificate of Qualification for 309A Electrician, Canadian Adult Education Credential, Mature Student Admission Test, etc.)
- First attempt or re-write? If re-write: what happened last time?
- Format (multiple-choice, short answer, essay, etc.)
- Exam date if booked, or learner's target date
- Number of questions and time allowed
- Passing grade required and/or other criteria to pass
- Study materials available to learner (own notes, study guides, trade manuals, online sites, industry publications, etc.)

A simple table like the one below could be customized to your program intake as needed.

Intake Summary – Exam Preparation	
Learner's name	
Date	
Exam name	
First attempt or rewrite	
If rewrite, note issues or challenges	
Exam date (or target date)	
Format of the exam	
Number of questions & time allowed	
Passing grade/criteria required	
Available study materials	
Other notes	



Sample Writing Assessment for Exam Preparation Learners

Complete the writing activity below.

Your response will help us to select activities and assignments that meet your needs for improving your exam preparation and test-taking skills.

Instructions

1. In the space provided, write two to three paragraphs to answer the questions listed below.
2. Use complete sentences in your response. You may use a dictionary.
3. It might be helpful to make some point-form notes before you write your response.

Questions:

- What exam or test are you preparing for?
- Why is it important that you do well on the exam?
- How will the successful completion of the exam get you closer to your goals?
- How can this program best help you to prepare for the exam?

Interpretation for Assessors

Below is the indicator overview for the OALCF Competency B – Communicate Ideas and Information. The task group, “Write continuous text” applies to the writing sample in the assessment described above.

Indicator Overview	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Task Group B2: Write continuous text	B2.1 Write brief texts to convey simple ideas and factual information	B2.2 Write texts to explain and describe information and ideas	B2.3 Write longer texts to present information, ideas and opinions

For a complete list of performance descriptors and task descriptors for Competency B, consult the [OALCF Curriculum Framework](#).



Sample Reading Assessment for Exam Preparation Learners

Complete the reading activity below.

Your response will help us to select activities and assignments that meet your needs for improving your exam preparation and test-taking skills.

Instructions

1. Read Option 1 - What He Did Differently
2. There are eight multiple-choice questions at the end of the reading. Circle the best response for each question

Option 1 - What He Did Differently

Marcus had worked as an automotive service technician for nine years. He knew his trade well. When he finally sat down to write his Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) exam, he felt ready.

He wasn't ready for the exam itself.

He ran out of time with fifteen questions still unanswered. He had spent too long on a few items he wasn't sure about, and by the time he noticed how far behind he was, he couldn't recover. He walked out of the testing centre feeling like he had let himself down.

For a few weeks, Marcus didn't talk about it much. Then, slowly, he started to think about it differently. He wasn't the first person to be unsuccessful. He wouldn't be the last. And the thing that had stopped him wasn't his knowledge of the trade — it was how he had managed his time during the exam. Those were two different problems.

He signed up for a preparation program. In the first session, the facilitator asked him a question he hadn't expected: "What did you do when you got stuck on a hard question?"

Marcus thought about it. "I stayed on it," he said. "I kept trying. I didn't want to leave it blank."

"That's very common," she said. "And it cost you fifteen answers at the end." Over the next few weeks, Marcus practised something he found surprisingly difficult: moving on. Flagging a question he was stuck on, keeping his pace, and trusting that he could come back to it. It felt wrong at first. Then it started to feel like a strategy.

On his second attempt, Marcus finished with eight minutes to spare. Having those extra minutes felt different than he expected — it felt like proof that he understood something he hadn't understood before.

Questions

1. Why did Marcus believe he was ready for the C of Q exam?

- A. He had recently completed a formal exam preparation program.
- B. He had scored well on practice exams he completed on his own.
- C. He had nine years of hands-on experience in his trade.
- D. He had received strong results in his final level of in-school training.

2. What was the main reason Marcus was unsuccessful on his first attempt?

- A. He did not have enough knowledge of the trade content.
- B. He found the questions confusing and difficult to read.
- C. He ran out of time before completing all of the questions.
- D. He skipped difficult questions and did not return to them.

3. How did Marcus first respond after leaving the testing centre?

- A. He signed up for a preparation program right away.
- B. He contacted the testing centre to ask for his results.
- C. He practised harder questions on his own at home.
- D. He avoided talking about what had happened for several weeks.

4. What did Marcus's facilitator help him understand about his first attempt?

- A. That he needed to review more trade content before trying again.
- B. That staying too long on difficult questions had cost him time at the end.
- C. That skipping questions is never a reliable approach on timed exams.
- D. That anxiety was the main factor affecting his performance.

5. Which of the following best describes how Marcus's strategy changed the second time?

- A. He guessed quickly on hard questions and kept moving without marking them.
- B. He skipped every question he wasn't immediately certain about.
- C. He learned to flag difficult questions, maintain his pace, and return to them later.
- D. He focused only on the questions he was confident about and ignored the rest.

6. Why was "moving on" surprisingly difficult for Marcus to practise?

- A. His facilitator had not explained the strategy in enough detail.
- B. Leaving a question – even temporarily – felt wrong to him at first.
- C. The practice materials he used did not include enough challenging questions.
- D. He had more time during practice than he did during the real exam.

7. Which of the following best describes the difference between Marcus's two exam attempts?

- A. He knew more content on his second attempt than his first.
- B. The second exam was shorter, which gave him more time per question.
- C. He managed his time deliberately on his second attempt and finished the exam.
- D. His facilitator gave him strategies that made the questions easier to read.

8. What is the MOST IMPORTANT lesson from Marcus's experience?

- A. Apprentices should complete a preparation program before their first exam attempt.
- B. Exam performance depends mainly on how much time a person has to study.
- C. Strong trade knowledge is enough to succeed on a standardized exam.
- D. Understanding what went wrong is the first step toward doing better.

Answer Key: 1-C, 2-C, 3-D, 4-B, 5-C, 6-B, 7-C, 8-D

Option 2 - What Keisha Already Knew

Keisha had left high school in her final year. At the time, it had made sense — her mother was sick, the bills were real, and staying in school felt like something she couldn't afford. That was seventeen years ago.

Now she was 34, working part-time at a grocery store, raising two kids, and sitting at her kitchen table at ten o'clock at night, staring at a practice test for the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) exam. She had been staring at it for forty-five minutes.

Keisha wasn't sure what she was afraid of, exactly. Failing, yes. But something else too — that she might try her hardest and find out she wasn't smart enough and that the years away had changed her into someone who couldn't do this. Her tutor, Sandra, had said something in their last session that Keisha kept coming back to. "You're not starting from zero," Sandra had told her. "You've been reading, problem-solving, and making decisions every single day. The test doesn't know that about you yet. Your job is to show it."

Keisha picked up her pencil.

She read the first question — a short passage about water conservation. She didn't recognize every word, but she could follow the argument. She crossed out two answers that seemed clearly wrong, then looked more carefully at the remaining two. She chose the one that matched what the passage actually said, not just what she already believed about the topic. She kept going.

By the time she reached the last question, it was 11:15. She hadn't answered everything correctly. But she had answered everything — and for most questions, she knew why she had chosen what she chose. She stacked the pages and set down her pencil.

It wasn't the test that had changed between ten o'clock and 11:15. It was what she was willing to do with the time in front of her.

Questions

1. Why had Keisha originally left high school?

- A. She had decided that college was a better fit for her than high school.
- B. She wanted to focus on preparing for the CAEC exam.
- C. Her family situation made it impossible to stay at the time.
- D. She had already passed the courses she needed and left early.

2. What was Keisha's DEEPER fear, beyond just failing the practice test?

- A. That she would run out of time before finishing all the questions.
- B. That she had forgotten too much of the academic content to catch up.
- C. That her tutor would be disappointed with her results.
- D. That trying her hardest still might not be enough to succeed.

3. What did Sandra mean when she said, "You're not starting from zero"?

- A. Keisha had already passed a similar test several years earlier.
- B. Keisha's everyday experiences had given her skills that were relevant to the exam.
- C. Keisha had already reviewed most of the material covered on the test.
- D. Keisha was further along in the program than she realized.

4. Which strategy did Keisha use when answering the reading questions?

- A. She wrote down key words from each question before reading the passage.
- B. She skipped questions she wasn't sure about and returned to them later.
- C. She eliminated clearly wrong answers and compared what remained against the passage.
- D. She relied on what she already knew about each topic rather than re-reading.

5. Which of the following BEST describes the change in Keisha from the beginning of the story to the end?

- A. She went from organized to overwhelmed.
- B. She went from frozen to willing to try.
- C. She went from confident to uncertain.
- D. She went from unprepared to fully ready.

6. Why is it significant that Keisha knew why she had chosen most of her answers?

- A. It meant she would be allowed to check her work before submitting.
- B. It showed she was reading carefully and thinking through her choices, not just guessing.
- C. It proved that she had memorized the material from her study sessions.
- D. It meant she had completed the practice test faster than expected.

7. Which of the following people is MOST similar to Keisha?

- A. A recent high school graduate preparing for a college entrance exam.
- B. A student who has been studying full-time and is reviewing before a final exam.
- C. An adult returning to education after years away, working toward a credential.
- D. A skilled professional preparing to upgrade their technical certification.

8. What is the MAIN message of this passage?

- A. Adults who left school early are less prepared for academic exams than younger learners.
- B. The right tutor can make all the difference in helping someone pass an exam.
- C. Life experience counts for nothing on a standardized test.
- D. What changes isn't always the task in front of you – sometimes it's your willingness to face it.

Answer Key: 1-C, 2-D, 3-B, 4-C, 5-B, 6-B, 7-C, 8-D

Option 3 - The Problem in Unit 302

Priya had been a licensed plumber for six years. Her apprentice, Devon, was halfway through his second year. On a Tuesday morning, they were roughing in the water lines for a new apartment building – a job they'd both done before.

Around mid-morning, Devon noticed something. The measurements on the plans didn't match what was on the wall. The rough-in location for the bathroom in unit 302 was off by nearly 30 centimetres.

"Let's just make it work," Devon said. "We can adjust the stack. We'll make up the time."

Priya crouched down and looked more carefully. Then she walked back to the site trailer and spent twenty minutes on the phone with the project manager and the building's architect.

Devon was frustrated. They were already behind schedule. Every minute they waited was a minute lost.

When Priya returned, she explained what she had found. A late change had been made to the floor plan, but the plumbing drawings had never been updated to match. If they had adjusted the stack without flagging the discrepancy, the entire rough-in would have needed to be torn out and redone – after the walls were already closed in.

Devon was quiet for a moment. "So, twenty minutes saved us two days," he said. "And a conflict with the general contractor," Priya said.

Devon picked up his pencil and made a note on his copy of the plans. He had learned something that morning that no classroom had taught him yet: taking the time to fully understand a problem is not the same thing as falling behind.

Questions

1. Why did Devon want to "just make it work" and adjust the stack?

- A. He had more experience than Priya and was confident the plans were correct.
- B. He thought the project manager had already approved a design change.
- C. He was frustrated with the delay and wanted to keep moving.
- D. He believed the error was too minor to affect the final result.

2. What did Priya discover when she called the project manager and architect?

- A. The plans had been printed incorrectly by the supplier.
- B. Devon had been reading the measurements the wrong way.
- C. A late design change had not been reflected in the plumbing drawings.
- D. The building code required a different rough-in distance than the plans showed.

3. Which word BEST describes Devon's attitude while Priya was on the phone?

- A. Relieved
- B. Curious
- C. Impatient
- D. Confident

4. What would MOST LIKELY have happened if they had adjusted the stack without investigating?

- A. The project manager would have caught the error before the walls were closed in.
- B. The architect would have approved their adjustment without complaint.
- C. Devon would have been recognized for finding a practical solution.
- D. The rough-in would have needed to be completely redone after the walls were finished.

5. Why did Devon make a note on his copy of the plans at the end of the story?

- A. Priya asked him to document all changes for the general contractor.
- B. He wanted to remember an important lesson he had just learned.
- C. He needed to record the correct measurements for the next unit.
- D. He was unsure whether he would remember what Priya had told him.

6. Which of the following BEST states the lesson Devon learned that morning?

- A. Experienced tradespeople make mistakes that apprentices should watch for.
- B. Construction plans are rarely accurate and should always be verified first.
- C. Taking time to fully understand a problem is not the same as wasting time.
- D. It is always faster to correct a problem after the walls are closed in.

7. How did Devon's attitude change from the beginning of the story to the end?

- A. He went from confident to confused.
- B. He went from impatient to thoughtful.
- C. He went from curious to frustrated.
- D. He went from cautious to confident.

8. Based on this story, how might Devon approach a similar situation differently in the future?

- A. He would adjust measurements without checking plans to avoid falling behind.
- B. He would always wait for Priya to make decisions about discrepancies.
- C. He would take time to investigate before assuming a quick fix would work.
- D. He would document every measurement before starting any rough-in work.

Answer Key: 1-C, 2-C, 3-C, 4-D, 5-B, 6-C, 7-B, 8-C

Interpretation for Assessors

Below is the indicator overview for the OALCF Competency A – Find and Use Information. The task group, “Read continuous text” applies to the reading sample in the assessment described above.

Indicator Overview	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Task Group A1: Write continuous text	A1.1 Read brief texts to locate specific details	A1.2 Read texts to locate and connect ideas and information	A1.3 Read longer texts to connect, evaluate and integrate ideas and information

For a complete list of performance descriptors and task descriptors for Competency A, consult the [OALCF Curriculum Framework](#).



Sample Exam Preparation Self-Assessment

Welcome to this self-assessment! Completing it will help to identify areas where you would like to improve your exam preparation and exam writing skills.

For this self-assessment, we'll use the word "exam" to refer to any type of test or exam that you might be preparing for.

Please complete each section as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, and you won't receive a "score" for this self-assessment.

Part 1: General Information

First and Last Name _____

Date _____

Put a checkmark beside the type of exam or test you are preparing for.

- Canadian Adult Education Credential Tests – CAEC (for high school equivalency)
- Certificate of Qualification Exam – C of Q (for apprenticeship certification)
- Industry Exam (for employment)
- Mature Student Admission Test (for college entrance)
- Postsecondary Exam/Test (for college/university programs)
- General Exam Preparation (not related to a specific exam or test)
- Canadian Citizenship Test (for citizenship)
- Other (not in the list above)

If you selected "Other", please note the exam you are preparing for:

Part 2: Assessing your skills, behaviours, and attitudes

There are many skills, behaviours, and attitudes that relate to preparing for and writing an exam. Some of these are included in the checklist below.

For each item in the checklist:

- Check ‘Yes’ if you’d like to improve in that area.
- Check ‘No’ if you don’t need/want to improve in that area.
- Check ‘Maybe’ if you aren’t sure whether you need to improve in that area

You can skip any items in the checklists that you aren’t comfortable responding to.

A) Studying for an exam

- Check ‘Yes’ if you’d like to improve in that area.
- Check ‘No’ if you don’t need/want to improve in that area.
- Check ‘Maybe’ if you aren’t sure whether you need to improve in that area

Skill	Yes	No	Maybe	Add a comment if you’d like to explain
Managing my time				
Making study notes				
Reducing distractions				

B) Writing an exam

- Check ‘Yes’ if you’d like to improve in that area.
- Check “No” if you don’t need/want to improve in that area.
- Check “Maybe” if you aren’t sure whether you need to improve in that area

Skill	Yes	No	Maybe	Add a comment if you’d like to explain
Approaching the exam in general				
Following written instructions				
Answering multiple-choice questions				
Understanding the questions				
Writing clear answers				

C) Personal Situation

- Check ‘Yes’ if you’d like to improve in that area.
- Check “No” if you don’t need/want to improve in that area.
- Check “Maybe” if you aren’t sure whether you need to improve in that area

Behaviour	Yes	No	Maybe	Add a comment if you’d like to explain
Getting enough sleep				
Eating nutritiously				
Coping with other responsibilities (family care, work, etc.)				

The last two sections below relate to the way you may feel just before and/or during an exam.

Select Yes, No, or Sometimes to indicate whether these symptoms and concerns usually happen to you before or during an exam.

D) Attitudes and Concerns

Related to...	Yes	No	Sometimes	Add comments if you'd like to explain
Test anxiety				
Poor past test results				
Negative self-talk				
Over-confidence				
Fear of failing				
Trying to be perfect				

E) Symptoms/feelings during or just before an exam

Such as...	Yes	No	Sometimes	Add comments if you'd like to explain
Nausea				
Rapid heartbeat				
Sweating				
Headache				
Shortness of breath				
Dizziness				
Fear				
Irritability				
Frustration				
Going blank				
Difficulty concentrating				
Memory loss				

F) Summary

1. Do you have documentation related to a physical or learning disability, e.g. an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from high school, or a psycho-educational assessment, or a letter from a medical professional?

If so, please provide details below. You may be eligible to receive accommodations on the exam you are planning to write.

2. Is there anything else you'd like to improve related to exam preparation that wasn't included in the checklists? If so, please describe below.



SECTION 2:

Sample Content of a Learner Plan

A Get SET learner who is interested in exam preparation may already be in your program, or they may be a new learner who is interested only in improving their exam preparation skills.

While the Ministry provides a learner plan (LP) template, Get SET providers are free to create their own LP as long as it contains the required elements listed in the Ministry's [Get SET Service Provider Guidelines](#) noted on the next page.

Ensure that the learner plan:

- ➔ Includes the background information gathered in the learner profile
- ➔ Identifies necessary referrals throughout the process
- ➔ Identifies the learner's goal path
- ➔ Details the learning activities required to prepare learners for their goal path
- ➔ Identifies milestone tasks that the Learner needs to successfully demonstrate
- ➔ Identifies the culminating task
- ➔ Considers whether e-Channel delivery is appropriate for the learner
- ➔ Identifies the organization(s) that will provide the components of the learner plan
- ➔ Indicates dates and establishes timelines including:
 - date the learner plan was developed
 - start date and projected end date for the learner's program
 - estimated time per week learner commits to their Get SET program training which includes both supervised and independent study
 - dates for the learner and Get SET staff to review progress
- ➔ Includes any other non-Get SET program requirements of the Learner's goal path, e.g. certificates, courses, abilities, etc.

The features of the LP listed on the following pages could be used to add to an existing LP, or to create a new LP for a learner who is interested only in exam preparation.



Learning Activities and Milestones

The OALCF level of the learning activities and milestones will most likely be level 2 and/or 3 because learners working on level 1 tasks and activities would not be engaging in preparation for exams such as the Canadian Adult Education Credential, the apprenticeship Certificate of Qualification exam, Mature Student Admission testing, etc.

The LP could include learning activities and milestones related to the competencies and task groups listed below. This is not prescriptive but meant as a starting point.

Competency	Task Group	Milestone	
A – Find and Use Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A1 Read Continuous Text A2 Interpret Documents A3 Extract information from films, broadcasts, and presentations 	#3 (A1.2) #405 (A1.2) #6 (A1.3) #7 (A1.3) #204 (A1.3) #406 (A1.3) #8 (A 2.1)	#408 (A2).1 mid) #8 (A2.1) #9 (A2.1) #10 (A2.2) #11 (A2.2) #207 (A2.2) #14 (A3)
B – Communicate Ideas and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B2 Write continuous text B3 Complete and create documents 	#16 (B1.2) #21 (B2.2) #23 (B2.2) #24 (B2.3) #25 (B2.3)	#215 (B2.3) #30 (B3.2b) #32 (B3.2b) #34 (B3.3b) #35 (B3.3b)
E – Manage Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.2 Set realistic short- and long-term goals, use a limited number of learning strategies, and monitor own learning E.3 Set realistic short- and long-term goals, use a variety of learning strategies, and monitor and evaluate own learning 	#58 (E2) #59 (E3) #424 (E3)	



Other Required Elements of the Learner Plan

For learners who are interested in improving their exam preparation skills, their LP may reflect the elements noted below.



a) Referral In: Learners will often be self-referred (listed as “Informal Word of Mouth/Media Referral” in EOIS-CaMS) but may also be referred from other sources, e.g.

- EO – Apprenticeship Program
- EO – Employment Services Provider
- Independent Learning Centre
- Ontario Works



b) Goal Path: Depending on the type of exam the learner is preparing for, the goal path may be Apprenticeship, Employment, Postsecondary, or Secondary School Credit.



c) e-Channel Delivery: Some of the five Get SET e-Channel providers may offer exam preparation activities. For most learners, in-class delivery will be selected.



d) Culminating Task (CT): If the learner is in the Get SET program for purposes in addition to improving exam preparation skills, the CT will need to reflect their goal/goal path more broadly. If the learner is in the Get SET program specifically to improve exam preparation skills, the CT may relate to the type of exam the learner is preparing for.

In either case, practitioners should keep in mind that

- the decision to complete a CT is negotiated between the learner and the practitioner
- selecting a CT from a different goal path than the path noted on the learner plan is acceptable

Both of the above points are noted in the Ministry’s User Guide for the Culminating Tasks 2024 (available on the [OALCF Repository](#) where the milestones and CTs are also posted).

Some CTs are listed below that may be appropriate for learners preparing for exam readiness.

Goal Path	Type of Exam-Samples	Possible CTs
<p>Apprenticeship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) • Red Seal Exam • Trade Equivalency Assessment • Industry specific exam 	<p>Select a CT related to the learner’s trade, sector, or industry; there are many to choose from</p>
<p>Employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) • Industry specific exam 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High School Equivalency Test Readiness: Complete tasks related to general readiness to write Ontario’s high school equivalency test 2. Job Readiness: Communicate and use documents for job readiness 3. Problem Solving in the Workplace: Understand and use problem solving skills for different workplace scenarios
<p>Secondary School Credit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) • Mature PLAR challenge test 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High School Equivalency Test Readiness: Complete tasks related to general readiness to write Ontario’s high school equivalency test 2. Study Skills and Test Preparation: Interpret texts and perform secondary school readiness tasks to show an understanding of study skills and test preparation strategies. 3. Completing a Credit Program: Connect ideas and information about adult learners and their educational plans

Goal Path	Type of Exam-Samples	Possible CTs
<p>Post-Secondary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature Student Admissions test • Mid-term/final exams 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Postsecondary Admission: Prepare, plan, and complete activities that support admission pathways for application to a postsecondary education program 2. Preparing for Postsecondary: Read and use documents and data to find, interpret, and analyze information related to the postsecondary learning environment and financial readiness for further education

e) Other non-Get SET program requirements - this may include items such as scheduling the exam, paying the exam fees, providing documentation related to accommodations. These could be included on the LP but that is at the discretion of the practitioner.



SECTION 3:

Sample Resources for Exam Preparation

Below is a selection of online resources that maybe helpful in creating learning activities related to exam preparation. Each listing includes the source, summary information, and brief notes for Get SET practitioners. Some sites provide downloadable pdf documents, while others are online articles or videos.

General resources (suitable for any type of exam preparation) are organized below into three categories: Study Skills, Test-Taking/Test Anxiety, and Multiple-Choice Test Strategies.

An additional category includes resources specific to the Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) exam for apprentices in Ontario.

Study Skills

1

Title: Study Smarter, Not Harder: Learning expert shares studying tips to reduce academic load on students

Source: CTV News – Lifestyle

Resource Type: Video and interview (4 min 28 sec)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: Learning strategist Deena Kara Shaffer advises students to prioritize well-being—including adequate sleep and movement—over last-minute cramming to improve memory and focus. The approach emphasizes leveraging AI for practice tests and aligning study sessions with personal energy rhythms to enhance academic performance.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The video and article focus on all levels of testing, from quizzes to exams. It is geared toward secondary and postsecondary students but can apply to Get SET learners who are preparing for any type of exam.

2

Title: Effective Study Habits for Adult Learners - Practical Tips & Strategies

Source: BioTech Whisperers

Resource Type: Video (10 min)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: Effective study habits are essential for adult learners seeking to maximize their learning potential and achieve academic success. This guide offers practical tips and strategies tailored to the unique needs of adult learners, focusing on time management, organization, and active learning techniques.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This video is easy to follow and contains useful tips and strategies.

3

Title: How Can I Improve My Study Habits?

Source: Learn as an Adult

Resource Type: Video (4 min)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This short video discusses effective strategies to improve study habits, especially tailored for adult learners in vocational and adult education. It covers practical tips that can help establish a consistent study routine, create an organized study environment, and utilize active learning techniques that make the most of study time.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This video is a short overview but provides useful tips and could be helpful for group discussions.

4

Title: Study Well- Prioritize, Organize, Revise

Source: University of Saskatchewan- Student Wellness Centre

Resource Type: Online Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: The University of Saskatchewan's "Study Well" article highlights that effective study techniques—such as active learning, creating a structured schedule, and optimizing the study environment—are crucial for academic success and reducing anxiety. The guide further emphasizes the necessity of holistic well-being, including proper sleep and nutrition, to boost memory and focus during exam periods.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: Although this is a university website, the strategies and explanations are in clear language and well-organized.

Test-Taking and Test anxiety

1

Title: Shifting from Negative Self-Talk to Positive **Source:** Lakehead University - Student Health and Wellness **Resource Type:** Online Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: "Shifting from Negative Self-Talk to Positive" article offers practical strategies for managing student stress through cognitive shifts, such as recognizing negative thought patterns and practicing active self-care. Key recommendations include breaking down academic tasks, utilizing physical wellness techniques, and consistently applying these methods to build resilience.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This is a short article with practical techniques to help lessen negative self-talk. The material should be appropriate for Get SET learners and provides wider applicability beyond just exam preparation.

2

Title: Test Anxiety **Source:** ADAM: Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba **Resource Type:** Online article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: Test anxiety is a form of performance-based anxiety stemming from factors like fear of failure and poor study habits, which can lead to physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms. The [Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba \(ADAM\)](#) recommends managing these challenges through consistent study habits, practicing under test conditions, maintaining a positive mindset, and prioritizing physical health.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This resource refers to children but is useful for adults as well. There is a helpful list of tips to reduce test anxiety. The practitioner can introduce the resource by focusing on the benefits and away from language that is not relevant to the adult learner.

3

Title: How To Address Test Anxiety

Source: Anxiety Canada

Resource Type: Pdf workbook

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: Anxiety Canada's guide offers science-based strategies to manage test anxiety through physical preparation, study habits, and cognitive techniques to improve performance. Key recommendations include starting preparation early, limiting caffeine, practicing relaxation techniques, and reframing negative thoughts during exams.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This would be a good workbook for an adult learner to work through, either individually or in a small group setting. It can be printed easily.

4

Title: Mental Health- Test Anxiety

Source: Anxiety Canada-Here to Help

Resource Type: Online Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: The "Test Anxiety" workbook from Here to Help BC offers practical strategies for students to manage the physical and emotional symptoms of test-related stress. It focuses on overcoming "thinking traps" through realistic thinking, preparing effectively, and utilizing coping techniques like calm breathing. It is broken down into four parts: Identifying test anxiety, Realistic think for test anxiety, Coping with test anxiety and Tips for test success

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This is a helpful resource for adult learners to utilize online.

5

Title: Managing Test Anxiety
Source: Queen's University
Resource Type: Online Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This guide on managing test anxiety encourages students to accept and utilize anxiety as a motivational tool rather than resisting it. Key strategies include self-kindness, creating emotional space, and applying the WOOP (Wish-Outcome-Obstacle-Plan) method to prepare for exam challenges.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: Resources listed at the end of the article contain practical links to support learners.

Multiple-Choice Test Strategies

Note Some resources listed below are produced by Canadian universities. They have been included because the information provided is clear, useful, and relevant for exam preparation both within and outside of a postsecondary setting.

1

Title: 7 Tips and Strategies for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions
Source: 2 Minute Classroom **Resource Type:** Video – Animated Slides (3 min 34 sec)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: The seven tips provided in this video provide a good summary of how to approach multiple-choice questions quickly and effectively.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The video could be used as an introduction and/or a summary to quick tips for tackling multiple-choice questions on a test or exam.

2

Title: Test-taking Tips and Strategies **Source:** Teachings in Education **Resource Type:** Video – White Board Cue Cards (4 min)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This short video provides 12 test-taking tips and strategies. Some are specific to multiple-choice questions, while others are more general. The video also provides reasons why each strategy will actually help students.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The cue cards are well done and provide a quick summary of 12 different tips. Note that tip #7 suggests that test-takers, “...have the proctor clarify unclear questions.” This is not applicable in many exam settings.

3

Title: How to Ace Multiple-Choice Tests (When You Don't Know the Answers)

Source: henrydidit

Resource Type: Video (4 min 34 sec)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: The evidence-based strategies presented in this video may help improve results on multiple-choice tests and exams.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This is a narrative style video with a bit of humour. Some of the vocabulary may be slightly more difficult, but the content and approach are engaging.

4

Title: Five Tips to Ace Your Multiple-Choice Exams

Source: University of Toronto **Resource Type:** Pdf Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This one-page overview provides five tips to promote success on multiple-choice tests and exams.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This resource provides a good summary; more detailed information may also be useful.

5

Title: Five Tips to Ace Your Multiple-Choice Exams

Source: University of Guelph **Resource Type:**
Online Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: There are five sections in this resource, each with a set of tips and guidelines organized as follows: Understand multiple-choice exams; Prepare before the exam; Use effective strategies to write the exam; Use exam results to improve your skills.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The information in this resource could be used in a self-study format or in a group setting. Sample multiple-choice questions are available but focus on university study topics and are not relevant to Get SET learners.

6

Title: Study Strategies for Multiple-Choice and More

Source: Trent University **Resource Type:** Video (16 min)

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: While this resource mentions preparing for ‘mid-term’ and ‘final’ exams in a postsecondary setting, it provides good explanations of multiple-choice test design and strategies for approaching multiple-choice questions.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The video has a postsecondary focus but contains useful information and graphics.

7

Title: Strategies for Taking Multiple-Choice Exams

Source: Concordia University
Resource Type: Pdf Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This one-page resource describes a 3-step approach to handling multiple-choice questions and emphasizes a strategy for answering questions in a particular order.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This is a short and useful summary with clear language.

8

Title: Multiple-Choice Test Taking Strategies

Source: Toronto Metropolitan University

Resource Type: PDF Article

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This 2-page resource provides a list of strategies related to general test-taking as well as information specific to multiple-choice questions and how to read and approach them.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The article provides a good combination of general test-taking tips as well as some specific to multiple-choice tests.

9

Title: Multiple-Choice Test Taking Strategies

Source: Scholastic **Resource Type:** PDF - Slides

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This resource contains four animated slides that summarize several useful strategies.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The slides provide an alternative to text-based list or steps.

Resources for Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) Exam Preparation in Ontario

Note

[Skilled Trades Ontario](#) (STO) is the provincial authority responsible for apprenticeship training, certifying exams, and much more. The former “Ontario College of Trades” has been replaced by STO. For current information about skilled trades and apprenticeship training in Ontario, consult the [STO](#) site.

1

Title: Trade Examinations in Ontario - Exam Preparation Guide

Source: Skilled Trades Ontario

Resource Type: PDF booklet

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: This comprehensive guide provides apprentices with information needed to plan, book, and prepare for the C of Q exam in their chosen trade. It also contains useful checklists, e.g. self-assessment, exam day.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This is the definitive resource for apprentices in Ontario who are preparing for the C of Q exam. Get SET practitioners who are supporting apprentices with exam preparation skills should be familiar with the content in this guide. The guide can be supplemented with additional resources related to study skills, multiple-choice test-taking, etc.

2

Title: Preparing for the Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) Exam

Source: Community Literacy of Ontario

Resource Type: Webinar (60 min)

URL: [Vimeo link](#)

Summary: The Examination Coordinator at Skilled Trades Ontario discusses exam resources available to Get SET (formerly LBS) organizations to help support clients who are preparing to write the Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) exam.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: This webinar is directed at practitioners and provides a detailed overview of the C of Q process and supports administered by Skilled Trades Ontario.

3

Title: Red Seal Exam Preparation Guide

Source: Red Seal

Resource Type: PDF booklet

URL: [Link](#)

Summary: For apprentices in a Red Seal trade, this guide provides extensive information about the Red Seal qualification and exam process. Sample test questions are also available (see also the resource listed below), along with some strategies for exam writing.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: For Red Seal trades in Canada (those for which an interprovincial qualification is available), this guide provides comprehensive and useful information about the Red Seal exam process. The guide can be used in combination with additional resources related to study skills, multiple-choice test-taking, etc.

4

Title: Red Seal Sample Examination Questions

Source: Red Seal

Resource Type: PDF booklet

URL: [link](#)

Summary: Apprentices can use this site to become familiar with the Red Seal questions format by completing a set of 20 sample questions specific to their chosen trade. After answering all of the questions, an overview of results is provided.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: The sample multiple-choice questions provided for each Red Seal trade provide good practice for apprentices preparing to write (or re-write) the Red Seal C of Q exam.

Note

In the resource booklets listed below, references to the Ontario College of Trades are no longer accurate. Skilled Trades Ontario now provides the most up to date information about the C of Q process in Ontario.

5

Title: Getting the Job Done: Preparing to Write the Certificate of Qualification Examination in Ontario Tools and Tips

Source: Mid North Network for the Coordination and Development of Adult Learning (MNN)

Resource Type: PDF workbooks

URL: see below for each workbook

- [Automotive Service Technician](#)
- [Construction and Maintenance Electrician](#)
- [General Carpenter](#)
- [Industrial Mechanic \(Millwright\)](#)
- [Plumber](#)

Summary: The Mid North Network developed this series of five workbooks to support apprentices preparing for the C of Q exam in the trades listed above. Each workbook contains a math refresher as well as information related to general study skills and test-taking skills.

Notes for Get SET practitioners: These are PDF workbooks that can be printed and are Get SET friendly. The MNN is planning to update and re-release them in 2026-27.



SECTION 4:

Multiple-Choice Exams: A Sample Approach for Preparing

Below is a set of activities designed to assist learners in improving their approach to answering multiple-choice questions (MCQ) on tests and exams.

It provides a structured process that serves two purposes: it gives the practitioner the information needed to target support, and it gives the learner a clear starting point and sense of direction.

The practitioner and learner templates referenced in the activities below are included as stand-alone documents in the appendices (at the end of this section).

Exam Readiness Intake Workflow (60–90 minutes)

1 Step One: Clarify the Exam Task (10 minutes)

Gather the key information about the specific exam. Do not assume; always confirm.

- Exam name and type (e.g., C of Q for 309A Electrician; CAEC; PLAR challenge)
- First attempt or re-write? If re-write-, what happened last time?
- Format (multi- choice, short answer, essay, etc.)
- Exam date if booked, or learner’s target date
- Number of questions and time allowed (learner confirms through official channel)
- Passing grade or threshold
- Study materials available to learner (own notes, study guides, trade manuals)

2 Step Two – Baseline Performance Snapshot (15 minutes)

Run a short observed MCQ task (8–10 items from learner’s own practice materials – do not provide trade content). Do not teach. Just observe.

Watch for:

- Reading precision - Does the learner underline qualifiers? Read all options?
- Elimination behaviour - Does the learner eliminate, or pick the first good answer?
- Pacing instincts - Does the learner get stuck? Rush? Abandon hard items?
- Anxiety signals - Visible hesitation, physical tension, answer-changing without reason
- Metacognitive accuracy - Does the learner know why they got items right or wrong?

3 Step Three – Habits Interview (15 minutes)

Use open questions to understand current study practices. Listen for what's working and what isn't.

- Study method - “How do you currently study for this?”
- Error response - “What do you do after you get one wrong?”
- Readiness criteria - “How do you decide you're ready?”
- Avoidance - “When do you avoid studying?”
- Pressure response - “What happens when you're running out of time?”
- Confidence - “On a scale of 1–10, how confident are you that you could pass right now? Why?”

4 Step Four – Learner Self-Assessment (10–15 minutes)

Administer the Exam Readiness Self-Assessment (see below). Scored by the learner; reviewed collaboratively. Maps to OALCF Competency E - Manage Learning.

5 Step Five— Start an Error Pattern Log (10–20 minutes)

Using the baseline snapshot from Step 2, together with the learner, log 3–5 items in the Error Pattern Log (Appendix B). Model the process once, then have the learner try it independently. Identify one dominant error category and one fix strategy to start.

Intake Outcome: What You Should Know

By the end of intake, the practitioner should be able to:

- Name the dominant barrier type (MCQ mechanics, study system, or performance regulation)
- Describe the learner's current study habits and where they break down
- State the learner's self-assessment score and what it suggests
- Identify 1–2 top error categories from the baseline snapshot
- Choose a starting support track (Track 1, 2, or 3)
- Set first-week goals (number of blocks, sets, log entries, and check-in date)

Exam Readiness Self-Assessment

The following self-assessment is designed to be completed by the learner during intake. The practitioner can also use it at mid-point and end of service as a reflective tool. Results are not pass/fail ; they guide the focus of support

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: Exam Readiness Self-Assessment

Instructions for Learners:

Read each statement below. Rate yourself honestly using this scale:

0 = Not true for me | 1 = Sometimes true | 2 = Often true
| 3 = Consistently true

<p>Study Planning and Organization</p> <p>1. I set a realistic weekly study schedule and follow it.</p> <p>2. I can break studying into short blocks (20–30 minutes) instead of long cramming sessions.</p> <p>3. I know which topics or task areas I am weakest in, and I target those first.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>
<p>Active Study Strategies</p> <p>4. I test myself from memory (quiz myself) rather than just re-reading notes.</p> <p>5. When I get a question wrong, I figure out why and change what I do next time.</p> <p>6. I can explain why I chose an answer, not just what the answer is.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: Exam Readiness Self-Assessment

<p>Exam Skills and Pacing</p> <p>7. I manage my time during practice sets (I check the time and keep moving).</p> <p>8. I read each question carefully, including words like MOST, LEAST, FIRST, NOT, and EXCEPT</p> <p>9. I eliminate at least two answer options before choosing my final answer.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>
<p>Regulation and Confidence</p> <p>10. I notice signs of anxiety early (e.g., rushing, blanking, second-guessing) and I have a strategy to settle myself.</p> <p>11. I can maintain a study plan consistently for two weeks without giving up.</p> <p>12. I can track my progress in a simple way (e.g., accuracy rate, error categories improving).</p>	<p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p> <p>0 1 2 3</p>

Scoring Guide (Practitioner Use)

Add up the learner's ratings (max 36).

0–12: Urgent study system and regulation build. Start with Track 2 or Track 3.

13–24: Mixed needs; use the baseline snapshot to identify the dominant barrier and choose a starting track.

25–36: Focus on refining MCQ mechanics, pacing, and simulation.

Use the error log to target specific weak areas.

OALCF Mapping: Exam Readiness Self-Assessment

The self-assessment items above can be mapped to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF), allowing practitioners to connect exam-prep support to the learner’s broader competency development. The primary competency for exam preparation is **Competency E - Manage Learning**, with supporting connections to **Competency A - Find and Use Information**.

Self-Assessment Item	OALCF Competency	Task Area / Indicator	Levels
1. Weekly study schedule	E. Manage Learning	Takes responsibility for own learning; manages time and organizes tasks	E2-E3
2. Break studying into blocks	E. Manage Learning	Manages time and organizes tasks to complete work	E2
3. Identifies weakest areas and targets them	E. Manage Learning	Identifies own strengths and areas for improvement; sets learning goals	E2-E3
4. Self-testing from memory (retrieval practice)	E. Manage Learning	Uses a variety of strategies to facilitate learning; monitors own learning	E3

Self-Assessment Item	OALCF Competency	Task Area / Indicator	Levels
5. Reviews mistakes and changes approach	E. Manage Learning	Reflects on and evaluates own work; adjusts strategies based on feedback	E3
6. Can explain reasoning behind answer choice	E. Manage Learning A. Find and Use Information	Monitors own learning (E); Reads and interprets texts to extract key information (A)	E3 A2–A3
7. Time management during practice sets	E. Manage Learning	Manages time and organizes tasks to complete work within constraints.	E2–E3
8. Reads qualifiers carefully (MOST, EXCEPT, etc.)	A. Find and Use Information	Reads continuous text to locate and connect information; attends to precise language	A2–A3
9. Eliminates options before choosing	A. Find and Use Information E. Manage Learning	Interprets documents to locate and verify information (A); Uses strategies to evaluate options (E)	A2–A3 E3

Self-Assessment Item	OALCF Competency	Task Area / Indicator	Levels
10. Recognizes anxiety and uses regulation strategy	E. Manage Learning	Persists through challenges; uses strategies to manage responses to difficulty	E2-E3
11. Maintains a study plan for two weeks	E. Manage Learning	Demonstrates follow-through; maintains plan and adjusts as needed	E2-E3
12. Tracks progress in a simple way	E. Manage Learning	Monitors own learning; evaluates progress toward goals	E3

 **Practitioner Note**

Even a brief exam readiness self-assessment like this one can serve as evidence of OALCF task engagement, particularly in Competency E - Manage Learning. When a learner reflects on their study habits, sets goals, and adjusts their approach based on error patterns, they are demonstrating learning management skills at Levels 2 to 3. Practitioners can document this as part of the learner plan and progress tracking

Choosing a Starting Support Track

Based on the intake, select ONE starting track. Tracks are not rigid—most learners need all three areas eventually—but starting with the dominant barrier produces earlier wins and builds momentum.

Track	Start Here If...	Primary Strategy Sets
Track 1: MCQ Mechanics	Learner misreads qualifiers, falls for distractors, is inconsistent with their approach, or changes answers without evidence. Baseline shows the wrong answer was chosen even though learner “knew” the content.	Strategy Sets A and B
Track 2: Study System	Learner re-reads notes repeatedly, has no structured plan, avoids studying, shows no improvement despite “a lot of studying,” or cannot explain their errors. Low self-assessment score on items 1–6.	Strategy Sets C and D
Track 3: Regulation /Pacing	Learner freezes under time pressure, rushes at the end, has strong anxiety signals, shows confidence collapse after wrong answers, or describes blanking on exam day. Low score on items 7–12.	Strategy Sets E and F



Implementation Rule

Do not try to run all three tracks simultaneously in the first two sessions. Pick one, build early wins, and layer in the others as the learner stabilizes.

Strategy Sets A–F: Teachable, Specific, Trackable

Each strategy set is described from the practitioner’s perspective (what it is, when to use it, how to teach it, how to monitor progress), followed by a learner-facing activity template. Learner activities are designed to be used during sessions and as independent practice between sessions.

Strategy Set A — The 5-Step MCQ Routine (Core)

What it is: A fixed routine applied to every MCQ item to protect accuracy and reduce anxiety load.

When to use it: All MCQ exams. Start in the first or second session with every learner, regardless of track.

How to teach it: Model the routine aloud using a practice item. Then have the learner apply it with coaching. Gradually reduce coaching until learner can self-direct.

- **Step 1:** Read the stem only. Cover the options with your hand or a card.
- **Step 2:** Underline or circle qualifiers and constraints (MOST, LEAST, FIRST, BEST, EXCEPT, NOT, numbers, conditions).
- **Step 3:** Restate the task in your own words in one sentence. “This question is asking me to...”
- **Step 4:** Predict the answer before looking at the options.
- **Step 5:** Eliminate at least two options with a reason. Choose and prove the final answer.

How to monitor:

Use the Routine Fidelity Micro-Rubric (0–2). Track preventable errors (qualifier misread, distractor trap, rushed reading) and answer-change rate per set.

LEARNER ACTIVITY: A: 5-Step MCQ Routine Practice

Use this activity with 3 practice items from your own study materials. Your practitioner will guide you through the first item. Try the next two on your own.

For each item, complete the following:

ITEM # _____

Step 1 – Read stem only (cover options). Done?

Step 2 – Qualifiers/constraints I noticed: _____

Step 3 – This question is asking me to: _____

Step 4 – My prediction before looking at options:

Step 5 – Options I eliminated:

____ (reason: _____)

____ (reason: _____)

My final answer: ___ Correct? Yes No If no: which step did I miss?

Reflection (after all 3 items):

Which step was hardest to follow? _____

What will I do differently on the next set? _____

Strategy Set B — Elimination-Only Drills (Anti-Distractor)

What it is: A focused drill where the learner must eliminate at least two options with a stated reason before they are allowed to choose a final answer.

When to use it: When the learner guesses, falls for distractors, shows overconfidence, or selects the first plausible answer. Use after a learner can follow the 5-step routine but is still choosing wrong answers.

How to teach it: Small sets (5–10 items). Strict rule: no final choice until two eliminations are written with evidence. If reasons are vague (“it just sounds wrong”), return to qualifier spotting and restatement.

How to monitor: Elimination quality micro-rubric (0–2). Track reduction in distractor-trap errors in the Error Pattern Log across sessions.

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: B: Elimination-Only Drill

Choose 5 practice items from your study materials. Your ONLY job is to eliminate options—you cannot write your final answer until you have eliminated at least 2 options with a clear reason for each.

ITEM # ____ Topic Area: _____

Option A: Keep / Eliminate? ____ My reason: _____

Option B: Keep / Eliminate? ____ My reason: _____

Option C: Keep / Eliminate? ____ My reason: _____

Option D: Keep / Eliminate? ____ My reason: _____

My final answer (choose ONLY after 2 eliminations with evidence): ____

Correct? Yes No

After 5 items — Reflection: Which option type was hardest to eliminate? What does that tell me about where I need to focus?

Strategy Set C — Error Pattern Logging

What it is: A repeatable method to classify errors and attach a fix strategy so mistakes stop repeating. This is the engine of measurable improvement.

When to use it: After every practice set, including very short ones (5 items). Include near-misses: low-confidence answers, guesses, and changed answers.

How to teach it: Model completing one log entry together. Practitioner and learner agree on the error category. Learner writes the fix strategy in their own words. Narrow to ONE fix strategy per session.

How to monitor: Watch repeat error categories decrease across 2–3 sessions. Track learner’s accuracy in naming error categories (metacognition micro-rubric).

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: C: Error Log Walkthrough (Single Item)

Choose one item you got wrong (or weren’t sure about) from your most recent practice set. Complete the log below with your practitioner.

Question #: ____ **My answer:** ____ **Correct answer:** ____

Confidence when I answered (1–5): ____

What the question was actually asking (in my own words):

Error category (circle one):

Misread qualifier | Distractor trap | Rushed reading | Overthinking/changed answer | Knowledge gap | Anxiety/pacing | Skipped routine step

What I missed or misread: _____

My fix strategy (next time I will...): _____

Now try one more item using your fix strategy. Did it help? What will you log next session?

Strategy Set D — The Two-Week Study System

What it is: A structured plan that replaces passive re-reading with retrieval practice, spaced review, and error-driven targeting.

Designed to produce measurable improvement over two weeks.

When to use it: When the learner studies frequently but scores don't improve, or when the learner has no consistent plan. Usually introduced in sessions 2–3 after the error log is established.

How to teach it: Build 6–10 study blocks per week (20–30 minutes each).

Three block types:

1. **Retrieval blocks**—quiz yourself from memory, no notes
2. **Correction blocks**—review error log and apply one fix strategy
3. **Mixed blocks**—interleave topics and question types. Targets come from the top two repeat error categories.

How to monitor: Track adherence rate (blocks completed vs. planned), accuracy trend on timed mini-sets, and error category trends across two weeks.

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: D: My Two-Week Study Plan Builder

Complete this plan with your practitioner at the start of a new two-week cycle. Bring it to each session so you can review what you completed.

My exam date (or target date): _____

My two biggest error categories right now:

Week 1 target 1: _____

Week 1 target 2: _____

Week 2 target 1: _____

Week 2 target 2: _____

Realistic study blocks this week: ____ blocks

Length of each block: ____ minutes

Block Planning (fill in the days and times that are realistic for you):

Day/Time	Block Type (Retrieval / Correction / Mixed)	Focus Area	Done (Y/N)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Weekly Check-In (complete with practitioner):

Blocks completed: _____

Timed sets done: _____

Top error category this week:

Did repeat errors decrease? Yes No

Which category improved most?

What I'm changing for Week 2:

Strategy Set E — Pacing and Simulation (First Pass / Return Pass)

What it is: A time-protection system that prevents time sinks and reduces end-of-exam collapse. Structures the exam into two deliberate passes.

When to use it: When the learner runs out of time, gets stuck on hard items, or panics in the final section of timed practice sets.

How to teach it:

- Calculate the target pace: total exam minutes ÷ number of questions = minutes per question.
- **First Pass:** Answer what you can. Mark time sinks (items where you've spent more than your target pace). Keep moving.
- **Return Pass:** Apply elimination and proof to marked items. Budget remaining time.
- **Schedule time checks every 10 questions or every 15 minutes—** whichever suits the learner better.

How to monitor: Track completion rate on timed sets, pacing execution micro-rubric, and number of time sinks per set across sessions.

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: E: Pacing Drill

Use this activity with a timed practice set (at least 10 items). Before you start, calculate your pace target.

Before the set:

Total items in this set: ____

Time allowed: ____ min

My target pace: ____ min per question

Time check every ____ questions OR every ____ minutes

During the set (First Pass):

Put a small ✓ next to items you answered with confidence.

Put a ? next to items you spent too long on or weren't sure about.

Keep moving—don't stop to agonize. Trust your instinct and mark it.

After the set:

Items I marked with ?: _____

Did I have time for a return pass? Yes No

Did I complete all items? Yes No

If not, at what question did I run out of time? _____

What will I adjust next time? _____

Strategy Set F — Performance Regulation (The Reset Routine)

What it is: A short (30–60 second) routine that interrupts anxiety spirals and restores the learner’s MCQ routine after a confidence hit, freeze moment, or panic spike.

When to use it: Teach it early (session 2 or 3). Practice it during timed sets. The routine must be practised under mild pressure to be available under real pressure.

How to teach it:

- **Teach the steps explicitly** and have the learner write their own version (see activity below).
- **During timed mini-sets, plan one “reset moment”**—a point where the learner intentionally pauses and runs through the reset routine, then returns to Step 2 (qualifier spotting).
- **Pair the reset with immediate re-engagement:** the routine ends with the learner returning to the question, not escaping from it.

How to monitor: Reset routine use micro-rubric (0–2). Track whether recovery time shortens across sessions, and whether routine fidelity rebounds after the reset.

✦ LEARNER ACTIVITY: F: Build My Reset Routine

Your reset routine is personal. It should take 30–60 seconds and leave you ready to re-read the question. Work with your practitioner to write your own version of each step.

My Reset Routine (3 steps):

Step 1 Breathe/Ground: _____

Step 2 Re-focus: (e.g., “Re-read the qualifier.”) _____

Step 3 Re-engage: (e.g., “Eliminate one option.”) _____

Practice log (record each time you used the reset during a timed set):

Set date: _____

Did I use my reset? Yes No

Did it help me re-focus? Yes Partly No

Set date: _____

Did I use my reset? Yes No

Did it help me re-focus? Yes Partly No

Set date: _____

Did I use my reset? Yes No

Did it help me re-focus? Yes Partly No

After 3 sessions using the reset: Is it getting easier to use? What’s still hard? Tell your practitioner.

Building Metacognition Without Making It an Essay

Metacognition—thinking about how you’re thinking—is one of the strongest predictors of learning success. But for exam-prep contexts, it needs to be fast and functional, not lengthy or abstract.

Teach learners the “Reasoning in 3 Moves” framework for self-explanation:

Move	Prompt	Example
Task	“This question is asking me to...”	“...identify the FIRST action to take when a gas odour is detected.”
Evidence	“The key qualifier/detail is...”	“...the word FIRST—so sequence matters, not just the correct actions.”
Decision	“I eliminated X because... so I chose...”	“I eliminated C because it’s a later step, not the first action.”

Keep it to 1–2 minutes per item. Use the metacognition micro-rubric (Appendix F) for fast scoring. The goal is functional explanation, not written essays.

Appendices

The appendices contain all practitioner and learner templates referenced in section 4 of this resource.

Appendix A: Personal Exam Preparation Profile

Complete this with the learner during intake (Step 1–4 of the Exam Readiness Intake Workflow). Update at each session transition.

Learner Name: _____ Date: _____

Exam / Credential: _____

Exam Date (if booked): _____

Format: MCQ Mixed Other: _____

First attempt? Yes No (attempt #: ____)

Passing grade or criteria _____

Time allowed _____

of questions _____

SECTION 1 – Goal and Timeline

Learner's goal (in their words):

Realistic study blocks per week: ____ blocks

Length: ____ minutes each

SECTION 2 – Confidence and Regulation Snapshot (0–10)

Content confidence: ____/10

Exam-handling confidence: ____/10

Anxiety intensity: ____/10

Triggers: Time Past attempt Wording Reading load Guessing

Other: _____

Anxiety signs (body / thoughts / behaviours):

SECTION 3 – Study Habits Interview Summary

What I do now: _____

What I avoid: _____

After I get one wrong, I usually:

What helps me stay consistent:

SECTION 4 – Baseline Snapshot (Practitioner-Observed)

Strengths noticed:

Barriers noticed: Misread qualifiers Distractor trap Overthinking

Rushed reading Pacing/time sinks Freeze/panic Weak study system

Other: _____

SECTION 5 – Top Error Patterns (from log)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SECTION 6 – Starting Track:

Track 1: MCQ Mechanics

Track 2: Study System

Track 3: Regulation

SECTION 7 – First-Week Commitments

___ study blocks

___ timed mini-sets

___ error log entries

Check-in date/time: _____

Appendix B: Error Pattern Log

Complete 3–5 entries after every practice set. Include near-misses (low confidence, guesses, changed answers).

Q #	My Answer	Correct Answer	Confidence (1–5)	Error Category (see legend)	What I Missed (1 line)	Fix Strategy (next time I will...)

Reflection:

Top error category this set: _____

Pattern I notice: _____

One change next time: _____

Error Category Legend:

1. Misread qualifier (MOST / LEAST / FIRST / EXCEPT / NOT)
2. Distractor trap (chose a plausible but wrong option)
3. Rushed reading (didn't read all options or full stem)
4. Overthinking / answer-changing without new evidence
5. Knowledge gap (content the learner does not yet know—refer to trade resources)
6. Anxiety or pacing interference
7. Process error (skipped a step in the 5-step routine)

Appendix C: MCQ Routine Card (Quick Reference)

5-Step Routine

Step 1: Read the STEM ONLY. Cover the options.

Step 2: UNDERLINE qualifiers (MOST / LEAST / FIRST / BEST / EXCEPT / NOT).

Step 3: RESTATE the task in one sentence: “This question is asking me to...”

Step 4: PREDICT the answer before looking at options.

Step 5: ELIMINATE at least 2 options with a reason. PROVE your final choice.

▶ 10-second stuck rule: mark and move. Return later.

▶ Answer-change rule: change ONLY with new evidence.

▶ Reset routine: [Breathe] → [Re-read the qualifier] → [Eliminate one option]

Appendix D: 2-Week Study Plan

Instructions:
 Plan 6–10 study blocks of 20–30 minutes per week. Use three block types:

- Retrieval (R)
- Correction (C)
- Mixed (M)

Targets come from your top two repeat error categories.

Week 1 targets:
 1) _____
 2) _____

Week 2 targets:
 1) _____
 2) _____

Day / Time	Block Type (R / C / M)	Focus Area	Duration	Done? (Y/N)	Note

Weekly check:
 Blocks completed ___/___
 Timed sets done ___
 Repeat errors reduced? Y N
 Adjustment for next week: _____

Appendix E: Exam Readiness Plan (Exam Day Preparation)

Exam name and date: _____

48 hours before:

- Sleep plan (target bedtime and wake time): _____
- Light retrieval + correction block only. No cramming.
- Confirm exam location, travel plan, and what to bring.

24 hours before:

- Confirm logistics.
- Pack bag.
- One short timed mini-set with pacing + reset practice.
- Review MCQ Routine Card once.

Pacing plan:

Total time: ____ min

Questions: ____

Target pace: ____ min/Q

Time checks: every ____ questions or ____ min

Two-pass strategy: First pass – answer what I can, mark time sinks, keep moving. Return pass – elimination and proof on marked items.

My reset routine:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Materials checklist:

- ID
- Booking confirmation
- Permitted tools
- Timing plan
- Water/snack (if permitted)
- Other: ____

Post-exam (within 48 hours – for re-write planning if needed):

What worked (3): _____

What broke down (2): _____

Next step: _____

Appendix F: Standard Session Flow and Progression Thresholds

Standard Session Flow (45–60 minutes)

1. Check-in: confidence and anxiety ratings (0–10), one sentence on how practice went
2. Plan adherence review: blocks completed, error log entries, what changed
3. Timed mini-set (10–15 min): with routine and pacing strategy in use
4. Error log (3–5 items): identify dominant error category
5. One targeted drill (based on dominant category): chosen from Strategy Sets A–F
6. Micro-plan: set blocks, sets, logs for next session; one clear takeaway

Progression Thresholds

Phase Transition	Criteria (aim for 3 of 4)
Phase 1 → 2	Profile complete. Baseline observed. At least one error pattern logged. Starting track chosen.
Phase 2 → 3	Routine used $\geq 70\%$ on two sets. Error categories accurately named. Repeat errors trending down. Reset works at least once.
Phase 3 → 4	Pacing checks executed. Completion stable. 2-week plan in use. Top risks and fixes named.
Phase 4 Complete	Readiness plan finalized. Routine fidelity $\sim 80\%$ on timed set. Elimination with evidence. Reset usable. Follow-up scheduled.

Micro-Rubrics (0–2 fast scoring)

Skill	0 – Not yet	1 – Emerging	2 – Reliable
Routine Fidelity	Skips 2+ steps or doesn't follow sequence	Completes most steps; misses 1 step inconsistently	Follows all 5 steps on most items without prompting
Elimination Quality	Guesses or gives vague reasons	Eliminates 1 option with partial reasoning	Eliminates ≥ 2 options with clear, specific evidence
Error Identification	Cannot name error category or describes incorrectly	Identifies category with prompting	Independently names category and explains what was missed
Pacing Execution	Does not check time or gets stuck repeatedly	Checks time but struggles to move on from hard items	Uses two-pass strategy; completes sets within target time
Reset Routine Use	Does not use reset or freezes through difficulty	Attempts reset but loses the routine afterward	Uses reset and returns to Step 2 reliably
Metacognition (3 Moves)	Cannot explain reasoning; describes answer only	Partially explains: states task but not evidence or decision	States task, key evidence, and elimination/decision clearly

Appendix G: OALCF Quick Reference for Exam Readiness Support

The table below summarizes how exam readiness support connects to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). Use this table when documenting learner progress or planning service that integrates exam prep with broader OALCF goal setting

OALCF Competency	Task Group	Connection to Exam Readiness Support	OALCF Levels
A. Find and Use Information	A1: Read continuous text A2: Interpret documents	Reading MCQ stems with precision; identifying key qualifiers and constraints; interpreting exam instructions and scenario-based items	A2–A3
C. Understand and Use Numbers	C2: Manage time C3: Use measurements	Calculating pacing targets (time per question); tracking accuracy rates; interpreting task area weightings	C1–C2
E. Manage Learning	E1: Identify strengths and areas for improvement E2: Set goals E3: Manage time and organize tasks E4: Use learning strategies E5: Monitor and evaluate learning	Study planning; self-assessment; error pattern analysis; retrieval practice; goal setting; study schedule adherence; performance regulation	E2–E3
F. Engage with Others	F1: Interact with others F2: Work with others	Accountability partnerships; peer study; practitioner–learner collaborative planning; self-advocacy with STO or testing centre	F1–F2



Practitioner Note

OALCF Competency E - Manage Learning is the primary anchor for exam readiness support in Get SET. Even short interventions—such as completing the self-assessment, building a two-week study plan, or logging and reviewing errors—generate evidence of engagement in learning management tasks at Levels 2–3.

Practitioners can document exam readiness tasks as OALCF task demonstrations when learners are engaged in goal setting, planning, monitoring, and adjusting their learning approach. Consult your program coordinator for guidance on documentation.

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