

## **Evaluation of an Adult Education Program on the Enhancement of Skills in Analyzing Multiple – Choice Questions**

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### **Introduction**

Education is life-long so as learning. As one ages, he needs to continuously learn new things and re-learn previously known knowledge or skills in order to cope on the demand of everyday living. As one learns, change occurs. Change is an indication of learning. According to Knowles, people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century experience more than four times social change as compared to those living before (Feltsan, 2017).

Learning is both timely and timeless. It is timely in the sense that one always sees every instance as an opportunity for learning no matter how simple or intricate it is. It is timeless in such a way that learning is endless and does not require age limit. Thorndike, in his book “Adult Learning”, ascertained that people whose ages range between 25 and 45 approximately have the same learning ability as those 20 years old and those who are 70 years old do as well like the younger ones in case time pressure is not a variable (Merriam, 2010).

The noun “andragogy” which denotes adult education was originally used by Alexander Kapp in 1833 and developed into theory by Malcom Knowles in the early 1970s (Javed, 2017). According to Merriam (2010), andragogy focuses more on the characteristics of adult learners than on the nature of learning itself. Its core principle is that learning is not restricted as once in a life time opportunity but one can catch up on the learning he missed during his younger years in order to reach his potentials (Barnes, Hughes, & Adriaanse, 2016)

Though there are various literatures and studies on adult education, there is still a need to explain how it differs from a form of education that is either formal, informal, or non-formal. Formal education has something to do with one’s credentials wherein programs are fundamentally structured. Its opposite, informal education, is unstructured. It includes those daily experiences that people have. Non-formal education is in the form of short-term programs or trainings. Woelke (n.d) opined that conventionally, non-formal education is considered as adult education. He claimed that the “social purpose” anchored to any adult education program draws the line between adult education and non-formal education. For this reason, every adult education program must have a social impact.

Today, there are different perspectives on what adult education ought to be. In this study, however, the functions of adult education as posited by Darkenwarld and Merriam are the ones considered. Adult education has the following functions: cultivation of intellect, individual self-actualization, personal and social improvement, social transformation, and organizational effectiveness (Woelke, n.d.). Thus, personal improvement is highlighted in this study. It is in the “enhancement of skills in analyzing multiple-choice questions” that personal improvement comes in. This is deemed vital in order to prepare the test takers in the upcoming September 2019 Licensure Examination for Teachers. According to Boyd (1988), test-taking skill is a fact of life, meaning, whether one is studying in school or

not, already working or still applying for a job, test-taking is inevitable. Hence, one needs to have good test-taking skills.

Sometime in 2010, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) released a moratorium for the programs such as nursing, business administration, and teachers education including Master's degree and doctorate degree both in education. Part of the reasons behind the moratorium for teacher education, according to CHED, was that the performance of Education graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) has been continuously declining. This was seen as an indication of poor quality of education offered by teacher education institutions (TEIs) in the Philippines.

Based on the findings of a study conducted by Janer et al. (2015) on *Enhancing Competitive Edge and Attributes of Graduates as Inputs to the Development of Teacher Enhancement Program*, factors that improve Education graduates 'competitive edge include pre-service trainings, job placement program, teacher education curriculum enrichment, and Licensure Examination for Teachers review program'. On the other hand, a study conducted by Bellen, Abela, & Truya (2018) on *Academic Achievement as Predictor in the Performance of Licensure Examination for Teachers* claimed that college academic achievement of Education students can predict their performance in the LET. Another predictor of LET performance is attendance in review classes (Ferrer, Buted, Mirasol, & Ferrer, 2015; Visco, 2015). Furthermore, English proficiency and LET-general education performance post a positive significant relationship based on the study of Kalaw (2017).

By and large, TEIs in the Philippines nowadays organize and facilitate in-house review classes in order to improve the performance of their graduates on top of their efforts to improve quality of instruction. Review classes are oftentimes both intensive and extensive. TEIs typically monitor the attendance of their graduates as the attendance to review sessions is found to be a predictor of LET performance. Likewise, it is important to note that the comprehensiveness of the review coverage is as important as helping graduates get use to taking multiple-choice test in order to equip them with skills in analyzing these test items. This is so when a test taker is not sure of his answer, he resorts to guessing game. However, "guessing" when taking a test must not be mere guessing but must be an "educated guessing". To do this, an elimination of alternatives may be employed as a strategy when one who is not sure of his answer in taking a multiple-choice type of test (Maryland Community College, 2003). This is one of the reasons why the skill in analyzing multiple-choice questions becomes crucial. One might forget the content of a lesson but the skill in analyzing test items and the techniques in doing it remains, thereby making this a life skill to be learned.

Test takers often feel the jitters before the actual test. This may similarly cause stress in their part. Thus, positive thinking is important for the test takers. According to Evans (2009), a degree of stress helps bring out the best in someone. However, he opined that if this stress is too great that it has become "fear" already, it can be very dangerous and destructive to someone who is taking an exam. Thus, he apprised the importance of positive attitude and positive mindset among test takers.

This study endeavored to evaluate an adult education program that focused on the enhancement of skills in analyzing multiple-choice questions in preparation for the upcoming September 2019 Licensure Examination for Teachers. Specifically, it sought to ascertain the following: (a) the LET takers' assessment of the conduct and management of the program in terms of expectations, content, resource persons, process and delivery, contribution to the institution's vision and mission; (b) the extent in which

the program is deemed to improve the LET takers' skills in analyzing multiple-choice questions about General Education Mathematics, General Education English, and Professional Education; (c) the extent in which the program is deemed to heighten LET takers' self-confidence; and (d) how LET takers describe the impact of the adult education program after taking the LET.

Results are based solely on LET takers' perception. This means that the "extent of improvement" refers to the LET takers' perceived improvement in terms of their skill in analyzing multiple-choice questions which was focused in this adult education program. This study does not include actual testing of the said skill through a test where scores of achievements are recorded and reported.

Findings of this study may provide insights to TEIs on what or where to focus when conducting review classes for board exam takers. Likewise, what surfaced in this study may also be considered when revising curricula and course syllabi for teacher education programs. The study may also provide inputs to administrators, teachers, future researchers, and different organizers in designing and organizing their own adult education program.

## **Method**

This study employed the processes of an action research. According to Tomal (2010), an action research is a practical method used to solve educational problems. He opined that though this type of research differs from quantitative and qualitative researches, it has the characteristics of both. Specifically, it uses an intervention in order to address a pressing educational problem. Tomal (2010) also noted that an action research does not require a tedious and elaborated statistical analysis because its main purpose is to cause improvement within the context of study. In this study, the concern focuses on the need to enhance test-taking skills of the Education graduates of a higher education institution in Region 3, Philippines in order to prepare them better for the Licensure Examination for Teachers. To do this, an intervention was done through the two-day adult education program in the form of a "final coaching" which focused on enhancing skills in analyzing multiple-choice questions.

This final coaching, as an adult education program, was held on September 14 and 21, 2019 in an amphitheater. It was attended by Education graduates of an HEI in Region 3, Philippines. Majority of these graduates are from Batch 2019 while only one attendee was from Batch 2018 and another one attendee from Batch 2017. The two-day adult education program focused on three areas: General Education English, General Education Mathematics, and Professional Education.

On the first day, morning sessions were focused on general education Mathematics and on doing manual and mental calculation techniques while afternoon sessions were focused on general education English. On the second day, morning sessions were focused both on giving inputs or tips on how to be more confident and relaxed in taking an examination while the rest of the period until afternoon were focused on professional education. There were two resource speakers or coaches on the first day and one resource speaker or coach on the second day. These resource speakers or coaches were known experts in the field they handled during the conduct of this adult education program. Program delivery was in the form of interactive discussions and test-retest. The skill which this adult education intended to develop or enhance was on analyzing multiple-choice question as preparation for the September 2019 Licensure Examination for Teachers. This skill is crucial to LET takers because it can help them acquire higher

probability of getting the best or correct answers when they are unsure of their answers. Hence, it may be considered as a life skill. The whole program was funded by the agency where the higher education institution is attached. Evaluation was done right after the program. On September 30, 2019, a day after the actual LET, a questionnaire in Google form was sent to the attendees in order to assess the impact of the program.

Attendees included 54 Education graduates from a higher education institution in Region 3. They were about to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers on September 29, 2019. Though there were a total of 54 LET takers, only 36 or 67% of them were able to completely accomplish all the evaluation tools given the same day after the program. These were the LET takers who attended the two-day training from morning until afternoon. Three questionnaires were used in the entire study. Questionnaire A: Training/Seminar Evaluation Form was provided by the HEI's Research Office. It has 14 items which inquire about LET takers' assessment of the conduct and management of the program in terms of expectations, content, resource persons, process and delivery, contribution to the institution's vision and Questionnaire B: Rating Scale on the Skills of LET takers in Analyzing Multiple-choice Questions is composed of 31 items; 9 of which are for the skills in analyzing multiple-choice questions on General Education Mathematics, 7 items for General Education English, 5 items for Professional Education, and 10 items are for Building Unwavering Confidence in Taking the Test. Also, Questionnaire B, as a researcher – made questionnaire consists of six (6) scales in order to determine the perceived extent of improvement of LET takers in analyzing multiple-choice questions. Similarly, the questionnaires underwent face and content validations by an expert in research and assessment. No changes were made in Questionnaire A while eight (8) items were revised in Questionnaire B. Questionnaire A was not validated anymore since it was provided by the research unit of the HEI. Right after the program, evaluation forms (Questionnaires A and B) were accomplished by the LET takers. Retrieval of questionnaires was made on the same day they were distributed.

Questionnaire C consists of 10 questions on the impact of the adult education program to the test takers during the actual LET. This questionnaire was sent to the attendees of the two-day adult education program a day after the LET through the Google form platform. Retrieval was made two days after.

To process the data, descriptive statistics was employed. For the data collected from Questionnaires A and B, rating scales, mean, and standard deviation were utilized using the Microsoft spreadsheet.

Below are the scales used in this study.

To describe the extent of improvement of LET takers:

Scale	Description
0.00 – 0.50	Not at all
0.51 – 1.50	To a very small extent
1.51 – 2.50	To a small extent
2.51 – 3.50	To a moderate extent
3.51 – 4.50	To a large extent
4.51 – 5.00	To a very large extent

To describe LET takers' assessment of the conduct and management of the program:

Scale	Description
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree
2.51 – 3.50	Agree
3.51 – 4.00	Strongly Agree

To describe the rating of the overall training:

Scale	Description
1.00 – 1.50	Very poor
1.51 – 2.50	Poor
2.51 – 3.50	Average
3.51 – 4.50	Good
4.51 – 5.00	Excellent

## Findings

### *Content and Management of the Two-day Program*

*Table 1. LET Takers' Perception on the Conduct and Management of the Program*

Indicators	1st Day of Training			2nd Day of Training		
	AVE	Description	SD	AVE	Description	SD
<b>Objectives/Expectations</b>						
The training met my expectations.	3.89	Strongly Agree	0.32	3.89	Strongly Agree	0.32
I will be able to apply the knowledge learned.	3.92	Strongly Agree	0.28	3.89	Strongly Agree	0.32
The training objectives were identified and followed.	3.89	Strongly Agree	0.32	3.97	Strongly Agree	0.17
<b>Content</b>						
The content was organized and easy to follow.	3.75	Strongly Agree	0.44	3.94	Strongly Agree	0.23
The materials (if any) distributed were pertinent and useful.	3.86	Strongly Agree	0.36	3.94	Strongly Agree	0.23
<b>Process/Delivery</b>						
Participation and interaction were encouraged.	3.89	Strongly Agree	0.32	4.00	Strongly Agree	0.00
Adequate time was provided for activities/questions/discussion.	3.86	Strongly Agree	0.36	4.00	Strongly Agree	0.00
<b>Rating of the Overall Training</b>	4.81	Excellent	0.40	4.92	Excellent	0.28

Table 1 shows the LET takers' perception on the conduct and management of the adult education program. In terms of objectives or expectations, the LET takers strongly agree that the first and the second days of the program met their expectations (3.89) in which objectives were identified and followed (3.89 & 3.97). They also strongly agree that they would be able to apply the knowledge they learned from the two-day training (3.92 & 3.89). In terms of content, they strongly agree that the two-day training has an organized and easy to follow content (3.75 & 3.94) and materials given to the LET takers were pertinent and useful (3.86 & 3.94). In terms of process and delivery, the LET takers strongly agree

that adequate time was provided for activities, questions, and discussions (3.86 & 4.00) in which participation and interaction were encouraged (3.89 & 4.00). In general, the training was rated as “excellent” for two days (4.81 & 4.92). It can be gleaned however that the values for standard deviation have low variability in terms of LET takers’ responses. This may indicate that majority of the LET takers have the same perception toward the different indicators below with the lowest value of standard deviation of 0.00 and the highest standard deviation of only 0.40.

*Table 2. LET Takers’ Perception on the Contribution of the Program toward the HEI’s Mission and Vision*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1st Day</b>	<b>2nd Day</b>
Help the HEI to become an institution of quality education and academic excellence	90%	92%
Develop the LET takers to become competitive and socially responsible graduates	82%	82%
Develop LET takers to effectively contribute to the achievement of the goals of the institution	82%	82%
Contribute to the development of LET takers to become employable and assets to the industry	74%	77%
Help LET takers become proud of their local heritage	46%	51%
Contribute in the achievement of good governance, culture of excellence, solidarity, love of God and country	69%	67%

Table 2 shows the LET takers’ perception on the contribution of the program toward the mission and vision of the higher education institution (HEI). Nine out of 10 LET takers perceived that the two-day program helped the HEI to become an institution of quality education and academic excellence while eight out of 10 believed that the two-day program developed the LET takers to become competitive and socially responsible. Likewise, eight out of 10 opined that the program helped LET takers to effectively contribute to the goals of the HEI while seven out of 10 responded that the program contributed to the development of LET takers to become employable and assets to the industry. Lastly, five out of 10 LET takers opined that the program helped them become proud of their local heritage while seven out of 10 of them believed that the program contributed to the achievement of good governance, culture of excellence, solidarity, love of God and country.

*Table 3. LET takers’ Ratings of the Three Resource Persons*

<b>Resource Person (Mathematics)</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>SD</b>
The teacher/trainer was knowledgeable.	3.86	Strongly Agree	0.36
The quality of activities/ instruction was good.	3.89	Strongly Agree	0.32
The trainer met the activity/training objectives.	3.86	Strongly Agree	0.42
<b>Resource Person (English)</b>			
The teacher/trainer was knowledgeable.	3.94	Strongly Agree	0.24
The quality of activities/ instruction was good.	3.94	Strongly Agree	0.24
The trainer met the activity/training objectives.	3.91	Strongly Agree	0.29
<b>Resource Person (Professional Education/Building Confidence)</b>			

The teacher/trainer was knowledgeable.	4.00	Strongly Agree	0.00
The quality of activities/ instruction was good.	3.97	Strongly Agree	0.17
The trainer met the activity/training objectives.	4.00	Strongly Agree	0.00

Table 3 shows the LET takers' ratings of the three resource persons in the two-day program. The LET takers strongly agree that the three resource persons were knowledgeable. Hence, the LET takers strongly agree that all of the resource persons met the program objectives and their quality of instruction was good.

*LET Takers' Perceived Extent of Improvement*

*Table 4. LET Takers' Perceived Extent of Improvement in Answering GenEd Mathematics Test Items*

	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sd</b>
	<i>When dealing with multiple-choice questions...</i>			
1	I can spot the correct answer by performing manual calculation.	3.83	To a large extent	0.61
2	I can spot the correct answer by performing mental calculation.	3.77	To a large extent	0.69
3	I can analyze worded problems in Mathematics.	3.83	To a large extent	0.65
4	I can better understand other Math problems.	3.86	To a large extent	0.64
5	In case of doubt, I can apply techniques on how to spot possible correct answers.	3.83	To a large extent	0.65
6	I can utilize shortcuts/short methods in answering Math problems.	3.81	To a large extent	0.82
7	I can apply skills in Basic Mathematics.	4.03	To a large extent	0.65
8	I can perform mathematical operations with speed and accuracy.	3.69	To a large extent	0.75
9	I feel more confident in answering Math problems.	3.58	To a large extent	0.84

Table 4 describes the LET takers' perceived extent of improvement in answering GenEd Mathematics test items. After the program on GenEd Mathematics, the LET takers perceived "to a large extent" that when dealing with multiple-choice questions, they can spot the correct answers by performing manual calculation (3.83) and mental calculation (3.77). Likewise, to a large extent, they can analyze worded problems in Mathematics (3.83), can better understand other Math problems (3.86), can apply techniques on how to spot possible correct answers when in doubt (3.83), can utilize shortcuts/short-methods, can apply basic math skills (4.03), can perform math operations with speed and accuracy (3.69), and feel more confident in answering Mathematics problems.

*Table 5. LET Takers' Perceived Extent of Improvement in Answering GenEd English Test Items*

	<b>English</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sd</b>
	<i>When dealing with multiple-choice questions...</i>			
1	I can comprehend written texts.	4.06	To a large extent	0.58
2	I can interpret messages and derive lessons from literary pieces.	3.97	To a large extent	0.56
3	In case of doubt, I can apply techniques on how to spot possible correct answers.	4.08	To a large extent	0.70
4	For some unfamiliar words, I can use context clues in identifying their meaning.	4.20	To a large extent	0.58
5	I can identify famous authors and their works.	4.03	To a large extent	0.56
6	I feel more confident to answer the items.	4.19	To a large extent	0.58
7	I can apply skills in English grammar.	4.03	To a large extent	0.51

The LET takers perceived that after the program on GenEd English, they were able to do the following “to a large extent”: can comprehend written text (4.06), can interpret messages and derive lessons from literary pieces (3.97), can apply techniques on how to spot possible correct answers when in doubt (4.08), can use context clues in identifying the meaning of unfamiliar words (4.20), can identify famous authors and their works (4.03), and can apply skills in English grammar (4.03). Also, the LET takers felt more confident to answer the multiple-choice items on General Education English after the program (4.29).

*Table 6. LET Takers' Perceived Extent of Improvement in Answering Professional Education Test Items*

	<b>Professional Education</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sd</b>
	<i>When dealing with multiple-choice questions...</i>			
1	I can connect theories to practice.	4.26	To a large extent	0.44
2	Given a situation, I can identify educational principles applied.	4.20	To a large extent	0.58
3	I can eliminate wrong options from the given choices.	4.37	To a large extent	0.55
4	Given educational practices, I can identify theories, principles, and strategies applied.	4.14	To a large extent	0.69
5	I feel confident to answer the items.	4.11	To a large extent	0.58

Table 6 describes the LET takers' perceived extent of improvement in answering professional education items. After the program on professional education, the LET takers perceived that, “to a large extent”, they can connect theories to practice (4.26), can identify educational principles applied in a given situation (4.37), and can identify theories, principles, and strategies applied in a given educational practice (4.14). Moreover, the LET takers felt more confident to answer professional education items after the program (4.11).



*Table 7. Extent in which the Program Heightened LET Takers' Self-confidence*

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sd</b>
1	I am happier to take the LET.	4.31	To a large extent	0.69
2	I feel more ready to take the LET.	4.28	To a large extent	0.66
3	I will wake-up early on the day of the test.	4.83	To a very large extent	0.38
4	I will sleep early the night before the test.	4.72	To a very large extent	0.45
5	I will gladly share with my friends my feelings before the LET.	4.54	To a very large extent	0.56
6	I know what to do in case I feel nervous.	4.43	To a large extent	0.95
7	My things are ready before the LET.	4.81	To a very large extent	0.40
8	I feel more relaxed because I reviewed for the test.	4.31	To a large extent	0.67
9	I have the support of my family, friends, and teachers.	4.75	To a very large extent	0.44
10	I know what to do during the LET.	4.50	To a very large extent	0.51

Table 7 describes the extent in which the program heightened the LET takers' self-confidence. The LET takers perceived that, "to a large extent", after the program, they felt happier (4.31) and more ready (4.28) to take the LET. Thus, "to a large extent", they would wake-up early on the day of the test (4.83), would sleep early the night before the test (4.72), would gladly share with their friends their feelings before the LET (4.54), know what to do in case they would feel nervous during the LET (4.43), and feel more relaxed because they reviewed for the test (4.31). Lastly, the LET takers perceived that, "to a large extent", they know that they have the support of their family, friends, and teachers (4.75), know what to do during the LET (4.50), and would prepare the things they would use before the LET (4.81).

#### *Points for Improvement*

The LET takers noted some aspects which the program needs to improve on. Particularly, they suggested that more time be allocated for the analysis of GenEd-English, GenEd-Mathematics and Professional Education test items. In so doing, it was suggested that more handouts and test items be given to them. For Mathematics review, there is a need to consider some LET takers who are not adept in Mathematics with respect to the pacing of discussions on the different mental and manual computational techniques.

#### *Important Learning from the Program*

Aside from the noted aspects of the program which need to be improved, the LET takers mentioned the important learning they acquired from the two-day program. Majority of them said that the training taught them additional skills in analyzing test questions which they can use when they take the actual LET. In particular, most of them appreciated that they were reviewed on the correct usage of the prepositions in, on, at. They also realized the importance of good comprehension skills in order to pass the LET. Majority also mentioned that the program heightened their self-confidence in taking the actual LET. They also said that they were inspired by the different resource speakers and that they were able to appreciate more the nobility of the teaching profession.

### *Results of the Impact Assessment*

According to the LET takers, they were able to apply the skills in analyzing multiple-choice questions during the actual LET. This is especially true to all areas. On professional education area, one LET taker shared that she did not feel intimidated toward the items because she was trained to answer similar or parallel questions. Furthermore, majority of the LET takers said that the adult education program helped them understand deeply the questions. Also, majority of them shared that when they did not know the answer during the actual LET, they employed elimination method. When they felt anxious, they kept calm and compose as what they were told during the adult education program. They tried their best not to lose focus especially when proctors were giving instructions. Since they got used to time pressure in answering test items during the adult education program, they were able to apply that same speed during the actual LET. For them, the skill in analyzing test questions assisted them to a great extent during the LET.

### **Discussion**

In general, the two-day adult education program on the enhancement of skills in analyzing multiple-choice question was deemed successful. Results indicate that the program was properly managed and its content was able to meet the very objective why it was conducted. The expectations of the LET takers toward the program were met and the resource speakers were found to be effective in delivering the topics assigned to them. Aside from these, the LET takers believed that the adult education program is contributory to the attainment of the institution's mission and vision.

As perceived by the LET takers, this adult education program was helpful in enhancing their skill in analyzing multiple-choice questions on General Education Mathematics and English, and in Professional Education. Hence, their responses indicate that they become more equipped and more prepared to take the Licensure Examination on September 2019. Janer et al. (2015) posited that Licensure Examination for Teachers review program improves Education graduates' competitive edge.

In addition to the results, the participants perceived that, "to a large extent", they have improvement in General Education Mathematics and English, and in Professional Education.

According to Boyd (1988), test-taking skill is a fact of life, meaning, whether one is studying in school or not, already working or still applying for a job, test-taking is inevitable. Hence, one needs to have good test-taking skills.

Likewise, the LET takers perceived that they became more confident to take the LET after attending the two-day adult education program. To a large extent, the LET takers felt happier, more ready, and inspired. According to Evans (2009), a degree of stress helps bring out the best in someone. However, he opined that if this stress is too great that it has become "fear" already, it can be very dangerous and destructive to someone who is taking an exam. Thus, he apprised the importance of positive attitude and positive mindset among test takers.

Results of the impact assessment revealed that the adult education program served its purpose during the actual LET. Skill in analyzing multiple-choice questions was employed by the LET takers. They were able to apply the different techniques emphasized during the program especially when the LET takers were not sure of their answers.

Furthermore, the adult education program helped participants on how to manage test anxiety. As shared, they knew what to do when they felt anxious and how to remain calm and compose despite the tension.

It is recommended that an adult education program focusing on the enhancement of skills in test-taking be given to all students of HEIs as part of a student development program. However, for pre-service teachers, aside from incorporating test-taking skills to some related courses, an adult education program of this sort may be offered at least two weeks before their licensure exam wherein multiple-choice type of test is emphasized. This can either serve as a refresher program or a catch-up program that will help LET takers become more prepared and more equipped to take the LET. This can be also in a form of a culmination of any LET review program.

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