Requirement:
The Basic Skills Test is a state-wide requirement for Admission to Teacher Education. At EIU, the test is required for selection to all teacher certification programs. It is strongly recommended that candidates take the test during their freshman year. Furthermore, it’s strongly recommended that candidates take measures to prepare for the test in order to maximize their potential for success. Given the high stakes nature of this test and other required certification tests, we urge you to be prepared. Sitting repeatedly for a test will also require paying to take the tests multiple times, which will be costly.

Important Considerations
Effective January 2010, there is a limit on the number of times that an individual can take the Basic Skills Test. No individual will be allowed to take the Basic Skills Test more than five times. For this reason, individuals not passing the test should not repeat the test without taking measures to remediate their areas of weakness.

Effective September 2010, the State of Illinois increased the minimum passing scores required on the Basic Skills Test. In order to pass the Basic Skills individuals must achieve passing scores on the three multiple choice sub-tests (Reading Comprehension, Language Arts and Mathematics) and achieve a passing score on the Writing sub-test (Writing Sample). The minimum passing scores for the three multiple choice sections require individuals to get approximately 80% of the items correct for each given sub-test. Currently less than 50% individuals taking the test state-wide are passing on their first attempt. For this reason all individuals planning to take the test are strongly encouraged to follow the study plan below.

Individuals who took the Basic Skills Test on or after September 2010 and were successful on one or more of the sub-tests will only need to retake the sub-tests on which they were unsuccessful. Information on the retake policy is available online at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL15_whatsnew.asp#newbasicskills

Registration:
Registration information and materials for all Illinois Teacher Certification Tests are available online at http://www.icts.nesinc.com. The test can be taken either in paper/pencil format or in a computer based testing format (at selected sites, on selected dates). Please watch test registration and score report deadlines carefully. When registering for all tests please be sure to report EIU as a score recipient.

Suggested Study Plan/Preparation Resources
1) Review the Test Framework (http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL_fld300_FW.pdf ) - The Basic Skills Test Framework provides information on the content covered on the basic skills test in the areas of Reading Comprehension, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Writing. The framework is a great starting point to preparing for the test.

2) Take the Basic Skills Diagnostic Test (http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp) – The Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test is an interactive computer program that contains a full-length practice test form for the Basic Skills test, including questions for the Reading
Comprehension, Language Arts, and Mathematics subareas of the test (if you prefer you have the option of printing a paper copy of the test to complete). In addition, a constructed-response writing assignment, and sample responses to the practice test writing assignment is provided to assist in the preparation for the Writing subarea. The program also includes a tutorial providing instructions on how to use and navigate through the practice test, and correct answer explanations for the multiple-choice questions. Once you have completed the practice test print out and review the score report for each sub-test. Remember, the passing score for each sub-test is now 80%. If your score is less than 80% for any given sub-test you are encouraged to utilize the resources below.

3) **Schedule time to use the Merit Software Reading/Language Arts Bundle available in the Reading Center in 1320 Buzzard Hall ([http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/](http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/)) and in the 9th Street Hall Testing Lab. Most individuals require several hours a week for 5-8 weeks to see maximum benefit from this program. Later this semester this software will also available in the Instructional Technology Center. Use of the program is by appointment so be sure to sign up by contacting the Reading Center (581-7898) and/or the Office of Testing and Evaluation (581-5986).**

4) **Visit the Reading Center in 1320 Buzzard Hall ([http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/](http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/)) and utilize the printed Reading Workbook Series-Topics for the Restless. This series gives suggestions and practice on improving comprehension skills that are tested on the Basic Skills Test.**

5) **Work through the Basic Skills Preparation Program (developed by Illinois Community College Board) – The Basic Skills Test Preparation program is a web-based tutorial that works through all areas covered on the Basic Skills Test utilizing the test framework. To utilize the site you will need to register. The website is [www.basicskillsprep.org](http://www.basicskillsprep.org). At the website click Register Student and then enter our passcode which is 2UGH1RCCGM. You will then need to complete the information on the screen and then will be granted access to the preparation materials.**

6) **Utilize Commercial Guides (Illinois Basic Skills Test and ACT Study Guides) – Many commercial test preparation publishers have developed study guides for the Illinois Basic Skills Test. These study guides can be found at bookstores or on-line through sites such as Amazon. In addition to the Illinois Basic Skills Test Preparation books, many students have found ACT Study Guides a help in preparing for the test. The Booth Library also has some of these guides available in the Ballenger Teacher Center and the Reference Room (one of these guides is titled - *The Best Teachers’ Test Preparation for ICTS: Illinois Certification Testing System*)**

7) **Visit the Ballenger Teacher Center and review middle school/high school textbooks (especially in Mathematics). Many of the concepts covered on the Basic Skills Test are taught primarily in middle school and high school. The Ballenger Teacher Center in Booth Library has numerous middle school/high school textbooks in Mathematics and English that might assist you in reviewing the concepts covered on the Basic Skills Test.**

8) **Seek help from a tutor – Ask a former teacher, friend or acquaintance with exceptionally strong skills in the given area in which you need help. Share with them the results of your diagnostic test and then work with them through an ACT or Commercial ICTS Prep Book. The Math Department also has student tutors available that are willing to assist with test preparation but they require individuals to bring the results of the diagnostic test and some type of workbook (ie ACT Prep Book). Some test preparation companies also provide tutoring that may be of assistance in preparing for the Basic Skills Test.**
9) **Purchase Basic Skills Test Prep Software** – Some individuals have found software such as that available through Longsdale Publishers ([http://www.longsdalepub.com/icts-test.html](http://www.longsdalepub.com/icts-test.html)) and/or Comfit Online Learning ([http://www.comfit.com](http://www.comfit.com)) helpful in preparing for the test. Comfit has a 14-day free trial available on their website.

10) **Visit the Student Success Center Website** ([http://www.eiu.edu/~success/](http://www.eiu.edu/~success/)) - The Student Success Center located in 9th Street Hall provides a wonderful website full of hints on test preparation, taking multiple choice tests, and on overcoming test anxiety. Be sure to visit Student Success Center on YouTube and iTunes by clicking the link on the right side of their page.

11) **Watch for workshops designed specifically on preparing for the Basic Skills Test** – Series of workshops specific to the sub-tests of the Basic Skills are often scheduled over the 2-3 weeks prior to the exam. These are extremely helpful reinforcement and to get questions answered but should not be your sole preparation.

12) **Take an online Basic Skills Test Preparation Course** – Southeastern Illinois College offers a 1 semester online course (EDU 160) to help individuals prepare for the basic skills test. For more information on this course call Southeastern Illinois College at 866-338-2742, ext. 2441.

13) **Utilize other online skill building resources** – There are numerous online resources designed to help build your reading comprehension, language arts, math, and writing skills. Some of these resources are:

   c. PFD (Percents, Fractions, and Decimals) Boot Camp (WIU) [http://www.wiu.edu/users/mfjo1/wiu/BootCamp/PFDfront/index.html](http://www.wiu.edu/users/mfjo1/wiu/BootCamp/PFDfront/index.html)
   d. Math Power - [http://www.mathpower.com/](http://www.mathpower.com/) - This site provides information about basic math, algebra, study skills, math anxiety and learning styles
   e. Math Forum@Drexel- [http://www.mathforum.org/](http://www.mathforum.org/) - This site provides help in all levels of mathematics in a question and answer format.
   g. Purdue Online Writing Lab - [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/) - This site contains handouts and online quizzes on a variety of writing topics such as the writing process, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and essay writing.
   h. Townsend Press Online Learning Center ([www.townsendpress.com](http://www.townsendpress.com)) – Click on online learning center and then Try TRP Exercises
   i. Comfit Online Learning ([www.comfit.com](http://www.comfit.com)) – Click on register for 14-day free test drive to uses program free for 14 days.

**REMEMBER THAT EFFECTIVE PREPARATION WILL REQUIRE SEVERAL HOURS A WEEK FOR MULTIPLE WEEKS. DO NOT PLAN TO CRAM FOR THE BASIC SKILLS TEST!**

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