**Requirement:**
The Test of Academic Proficiency (formerly the Illinois Basic Skills Test) is a state-wide requirement for Admission to Teacher Education. In late June, 2012 the Illinois State Board of Education adopted a policy to allow an ACT composite score of a 22 on the ACT plus Writing to substitute for the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP)/Basic Skills as long as it falls within a specified timeframe. If you have an ACT Composite of 22 or higher on the ACT plus Writing you should check to see if you meet the qualifications to use your ACT score before registering for the TAP. More information can be found at [http://www.eiu.edu/ceps/teached.php](http://www.eiu.edu/ceps/teached.php).

At EIU, the TAP (or ACT substitution) is required for selection to all teacher certification programs. Candidates not meeting the conditions or score necessary to substitute their ACT score at entry to the University have the option of either taking the ACT plus Writing or the TAP. Regardless of the option chosen, 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 for the TAP**
There is a limit on the number of times that an individual can take the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP). No individual will be allowed to take the TAP 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. Attempts on the old Illinois Basic Skills Test do not count toward ones five attempts.

In order to pass the TAP 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 are set by the Illinois State Board of Education. Currently an individual must complete approximately 79% of the items on each sub-test correctly to pass that sub-test. Overall less than 50% of individuals taking the test state-wide are passing, therefore, all individuals planning to take the test are strongly encouraged to follow the study plan below.

Individuals who are successful on one or more of the sub-tests of the TAP will only need to retake the sub-tests on which they were unsuccessful. Furthermore, individuals who previously passed one or more sub-tests of the Basic Skills on or after September 1, 2010 will not need to retake those sub-tests. Information on the retake policy is available online at [http://www.icts.nesinc.com](http://www.icts.nesinc.com).

**Registration:**
Registration information and materials for all Illinois Teacher Certification Tests are available online at [http://www.icts.nesinc.com](http://www.icts.nesinc.com). The TAP can be only be taken in a computer based testing format (at selected sites). Testing is by appointment and is generally available Monday-Saturday. Check the above mentioned website for test center locations and availability as well as to register for the TAP. Please
remember that score reports can take up to five weeks so watch university deadlines carefully. When registering for 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 fld400_FW.pdf](http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL fld400_FW.pdf)) - The 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](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 old 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. While this is not a direct equivalent of the TAP test, the only real difference is that the TAP test has more items on each of the sub-tests.

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. 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). Please note, the Reading Center is not open during the Summer.

4) **Visit the Reading Center in1320 Buzzard Hall** ([http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/](http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/)) and utilize the printed **Reading Workbook Series** for the Restless. This series gives suggestions and practice on improving reading comprehension skills that are tested on the Basic Skills Test. Please note, the Reading Center is not open during the Summer.

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. While the title refers to the old Basic Skills Test, the content covered is useful for the TAP as well.

6) **Utilize Commercial Guides** (Illinois Basic Skills Test and ACT Study Guides) – Many commercial test preparation publishers have developed study guides for the old 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*). Once again,
while the titles may refer to the old Basic Skills Test, the content covered is useful for the TAP as well.

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 TAP. During the academic year, group tutoring is also available through the College of Education and Professional Studies. Watch for dates and times on our TAP preparation website [www.eiu.edu/ceps/basicskills.php](http://www.eiu.edu/ceps/basicskills.php).

9) **Purchase TAP/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 TAP Test** – During the academic year, workshops specific to the sub-tests of the TAP 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. Watch for dates and times on our TAP preparation website [www.eiu.edu/ceps/basicskills.php](http://www.eiu.edu/ceps/basicskills.php).

12) **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/mfjro1/wiu/BootCamp/PFDfront/index.html](http://www.wiu.edu/users/mfjro1/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 TAP TEST!

College of Education & Professional Studies

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CHECK THE TAP PREPARATION WEBSITE FREQUENTLY FOR WORKSHOPS, TUTORING AND NEW RESOURCES THAT BECOME AVAILABLE

[www.eiu.edu/ceps/basicskills.php](http://www.eiu.edu/ceps/basicskills.php)