

Advice for success in taking the ICTS Elementary/Middle Grades Content Test (110)

(Passing this test is a requirement for student teaching.)

What knowledge is tested?

- Knowledge of one sub area in language arts: focuses on how to teach reading and writing (you should gain this knowledge during your methods courses in Year 1 and Year 2, and of course through your field experiences).
- Knowledge of major concepts in these four sub areas: mathematics; science; social science (mainly history with some geography and economics); and the arts, health and physical education. You should gain this knowledge from all your general education prior to entering the elementary education program.

How should you prepare for this test?

The pass rate for this test is high: 95-98% of elementary education teacher candidates pass at the first attempt. However, each year about 20% of candidates do not pass one or more of the five subtests and still pass the test. Occasionally their score is low enough in one or more sub areas to bring their overall score below the passing score of 240. Social studies is the area that teacher candidates have the lowest pass rate in.

We suggest the following test preparation:

1) **Reflect on your own strengths in the subtests:**

(Check when complete)

- _____ Read through the *Study Guide Elementary/Middle Grades (110)*
- _____ Examine the general objectives for Language.
- _____ Examine the general objectives for Math.
- _____ Examine the general objectives for Science.
- _____ Examine the general objectives for Social Studies.
- _____ Examine the general objectives for Art/PE/Health.

Reflect on your knowledge in the following:

- i) teaching reading
- ii) teaching writing
- iii) mathematics
- iv) science
- v) social science (history, geography, economics)
- vi) arts, health, kinesiology

Which of these subjects are you concerned about? Why?

2) **What level of help would you like as you study the areas in the test:**

- a. Study the areas on your own via:
 - ___ internet
 - ___ textbooks
 - ___ video/DVD sources

- i) Take a course in a particular subject.
* See advisor: Can you plan to take a course in this area as part of your SIUE degree? Or you may be able to take an on-line course from a community college or another institution to fit your schedule better.
- ii) Meet with a faculty member who specializes in a particular subject.
- iii) Meet with a tutor to help you in a particular area. Any financial arrangements made for these services are entirely the responsibility of the tutor and tutee. (Some tutors have worked for \$10 per hour).
- iv) Possible tutors include:
 - Other elementary teacher candidates who have scored highly on the test in the areas you wish to receive tutoring.
 - Secondary education teacher candidates or students who are majors in these areas might be willing to tutor elementary candidates.
 - Dr Marlette will organize a critical review session on science sponsored by National Science Teachers Association Student Chapter
- v) Make **your** name available to other elementary education teacher candidates who have failed the test so you can form a study group

3) Are you a reasonably good test taker?

- a) Do you know how to approach testing so the test results are a reasonable reflection of your knowledge?
- b) Do you know about the format and expectations of this test?
 - Read through the *Study Guide Elementary/Middle Grades (110)* and complete the sample test.
- c) Do you have test anxiety in general, or about this test in particular?
 - Go to Instructional Services and look at test anxiety information/module

4) When should you take this test?

Passing this test is required for student teaching, therefore you should manage your test taking carefully. We suggest you consider the following:

- a) When you have completed courses in all the areas on the test
- b) Taking the test in the summer prior to semester 3 allows you time to register *and* retake the test in the fall *if you need to*.

If you would like to discuss your responses to any of these questions, please contact your supervisor, faculty or program director and have a copy of these questions with you.