Dear Advanced English Ed Majors and Minors—

Since 2008, the score required to pass the MTTC in English has been raised, with the result that more students are failing the test.

Therefore we offer this advice to advanced students planning to take this test:

1) **TAKE THE TEST SERIOUSLY.** It’s not a “gimme.” Our majors find the test challenging and our minors have experienced even more difficulty. Even good students do fail the test.

2) **LEARN ABOUT THE TEST** from its creators by going to the MTTC web site (http://www.mttc.nesinc.com/) and reading particularly the test objectives and the study guide the site provides.

3) Understand the **STRUCTURE OF THE TEST.** It has four parts: “Meaning and Communication,” “Literature and Understanding,” “Genre and Craft of Language,” and “Skills and Processes.” Our experience suggests that our students can benefit from review and study for all parts but for particularly the **FIRST THREE PARTS** of the test.

4) **GET HELP** if you need it, especially if you are an English minor. There are three commercial products that some find helpful: First, there is a study guide—the “MTTC English 02 Teacher Certification Test Prep Study Guide (XAM MTTC)” on sale from Amazon; second, there is a web site with a series of actual practice online tests, which purports to have the “look and feel” of the real MTTC (100 questions, two hours and thirty minute time limit) as well as the same types of questions. Each single test can be taken for about $12, although you can purchase five or even ten at a discount. Some students have reported that this is helpful. Finally, there are MTTC Flash cards. The web sites for purchase of these products are:


   One student (a minor) attributes her dramatic improvement on her second “take” of the MTTC largely to a careful study of this book available from Amazon.

   http://www.flashcardsecrets.com/mttc/ . The cards identify concepts keyed to different parts of the test, which can help you focus on potential weak points.

5) **BRING YOUR “A-GAME” IN READING COMPREHENSION.** Several students report that they were surprised that the test didn’t just ask questions on what they knew. It also often asked them to read extended passages of prose or verse as a basis for answering questions. As a result the MTTC depends significantly on your reading comprehension. Perhaps some practice in reading challenging prose or poetry would sharpen your performance on the test.

6) **REVIEW what you’ve learned and REMEDY YOUR GAPS IN TRAINING.** Look back over the literature and English education courses you have taken. What were the key concepts you learned? What areas might you feel you have gaps? Do you have familiarity with instructional approaches, literary terms, authors, or national traditions? **IN LITERATURE** familiarize yourself with the areas you consider weak. (We require that you take only one each of the two American surveys and one British course; you might get an anthology for the survey you didn’t take and read the INTRODUCTIONS TO THE DIFFERENT LITERARY PERIODS so that you’ll know more or less what is going on at those times. If you took a
Shakespeare course for the British requirement, review the literary periods for both halves of the British survey.) If you took any courses in Interpersonal communications or Public speaking, review them as they are relevant to the first MTTC area on the test, “Meaning and Communication.”

7) IF YOU DON’T PASS despite your preparation, DON’T DESPAIR. You are not alone! Read your report of the result carefully. It will give you a sub score (from 1 to 4) for each of the four areas, indicating your relative strength in that part of the test. Use the result to target your preparation for a re-take. Hit any area hard where your sub score is less than 3.

We hope this advice is helpful—and good luck on the test! After you take the test, I’d like to hear from you about your impressions. I want to know where you felt prepared and where you didn’t; what kinds of questions you knew and what was difficult; what helped in your preparation for the test; and what I should put into this letter for the next group of MTTC-takers.

Phil Egan
Director of Undergraduate Programs in English