CHAPTER 3

The Michigan Guide as a Textbook

This chapter shows how to build a multi-skills EAP class around the *The Michigan Guide to English for Academic Success and Better TOEFL® Test Scores*. The advice here is a set of suggestions, not an unalterable recipe. *The Michigan Guide* is used in programs very different from one another. Many programs will be able to adopt the suggested scope and sequence with only a few alterations. Others will operate on such a different schedule and with such different students that some changes are necessary. Still other programs will find that a different approach to the textbook better matches the teaching style of their faculty.

Our suggestions assume a college or university program operating with a semester of about 14 weeks. This yields 42–70 instructional hours depending on the length of a class, teachers' pace, level of students, etc. Additional hours can be gained by supplementing the textbook with the material in *The Michigan Guide to Teaching EAP Skills*. Most teachers can easily see how this program could be condensed into 10 weeks or expanded to 16. Running it in a term of fewer than 10 weeks would require some careful choices among possible tasks.

Planning a Course or Curriculum

The Michigan Guide was conceived to work as a traditional self-study TOEFL-prep book or as a textbook. Its true potential is best realized as the latter. An English-proficient teacher can explain correct answers to students, and can evaluate a student's spoken and written responses according to iBT-related criteria.

Many teaching programs will rethink their EAP curricula and their test-prep curricula in the light of the iBT's new, EAP-oriented approach. The many different answers they come up with will reflect a large variety of situations, student populations, and pools of resources. For virtually any configuration that blends solid EAP instruction with TOEFL-prep, *The Michigan Guide* is an ideal text.

Many programs will decide to offer some sort of multi-skills EAP class that, in a single semester or term, would touch on all four skills tested on the iBT. (The scope and sequence on pages 22–26 is designed for such a course.) No skill could be studied as deeply as it might be with a whole class all to itself, but TOEFL candidates would get a good introduction to EAP and the concise test-prep they are looking for. Multi-skills EAP classes will probably co-exist with skill-based EAP classes. The multi-skills/TOEFL-prep class in such a curriculum would act as a sort of survey class.

Students might go on to one or more skill-based classes later, take skill-based courses concurrently, or follow some other path that includes both the multi-skills survey class and other EAP study.

Alternatively, some programs might choose to divide instruction from *The Michigan Guide* among several teachers and courses, so that the students get their reading instruction in one class, their listening in another, etc.—all of which use *The Michgan Guide* as a text. This arrangement provides curricular continuity among classes and allows for a slower or more in-depth approach to each skill. In such a case, each teacher could use one part of the scope and sequence on pages 22–26 as a foundation and elaborate on it to create a full one-skill course syllabus.

A MULTI-SKILLS SCOPE AND SEQUENCE BASED ON *THE MICHIGAN GUIDE*

This assumes a 14-week term and could be trimmed to 10 weeks or expanded to 16 weeks.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
1 (approx 3–5 class hours)	**Intro to the New TOEFL® Test** ***Students will:*** Understand the relationship between EAP study and success on the test. Identify their own areas of strength or uncertainty in the English skills required to do well in academic settings. Identify their own areas of strength or uncertainty in the skills demanded by the iBT. Activate or begin to build schemata basic to taking the iBT. Outline sections of the new test. Learn what to expect in a real iBT testing situation.	Pages xi–xvii.	*Group or pair discussion:* • Who has taken the TOEFL® before? • Which version? • What were the easiest parts of it? The hardest parts? • How did you prepare? *Product:* Group report to class as a whole. If pair work, individual reports as if from an interview with the partner. Inventory the skills necessary to perform iBT tasks (on chalkboard as a group or individually). Discuss them. In which skills do students feel they are strongest/weakest? Keep this inventory for reference in the last week of the term. Set up a mock testing situation, with imaginary computer terminals, microphones, etc.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
2 and 3 (6 to 10 instructional hours)	**Reading I: Finding Main Ideas** *Students will:* Understand/recognize different levels of generality. Use semantic relationships (among vocabulary items) as clues to levels of generality. Recognize role of pronouns in cohesion of readings. Apply skills at finding main idea to complex readings of iBT length (600–800 words) Understand how main idea-support relationships are essential to the "reading-to-learn" questions (Prose Summary and Schematic Table) introduced with the iBT. Understand directions for Prose Summary and Schematic Table tasks.	Pages 1 to 30	Work with Venn diagram, p. 3 and inverted tree diagram, p. 4 Students select one or two passages (pp. 2–15) to diagram (in either Venn or tree format). Work slowly with Practice Readings 1 and 2. Students answer questions, then check answer-analysis sections. Teachers should be ready to explain answer analyses that are relatively complex. Stress work with Prose Summaries and Schematic Tables. Supplement with outside readings as necessary. Use Review Passages (pp. 31–42) as quiz.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
4 and 5 (6 to 10 instructional hours)	**Reading II: Vocabulary** *Students will:* Develop strategies for dealing with problematic vocabulary: • using context to select the appropriate meaning of a familiar word • using context to figure out an approximate meaning of an unfamiliar vocabulary item • recognizing definitions or explanations in a passage • recognizing word parts to deduce meaning Practice strategies with short readings. Apply strategies to readings of iBT length.	Pages 31 to 80	Do exercises pp. 42–48 to practice strategies in short contexts. Mention the iBT's "gloss" feature, similar to *The Michigan Guide's* marginal glosses (e.g., "petition" p. 58). In small groups or as a whole class, practice with short readings (pp. 48–56). Discuss reasons for choosing answers. Check answer key. Practice vocabulary strategies with readings 1 and 2 (pp. 58–66). Students answer questions, then check answer-analysis sections. Supplement with outside readings as necessary. Use Review Passages (pp. 68–80) as quiz.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
6 and 7 (6 to 10 instructional hours)	**Listening** *Students will:* Apply skills at finding main ideas (studied in the Reading section) to listening passages. Develop efficient note-taking strategies. Recognize the overall organization of a dialogue or lecture. Understand important details that support main ideas. Deal with backtracking, hesitation, and other difficult features of natural speech. Recognize clues to a speaker's implied purpose or attitude.	Pages 81–118	Use audio CD for group listening in class and assign audio-based exercises for homework. Refer to the audio scripts (pp. 239–59) as necessary. Students act out dialogues (whole or in part), using audio scripts. Students practice natural inflection and tone. In small groups or as a whole class, carefully review answer analyses on pp. 85, 98, and 115–16. Use practice passages on **Gender** (p. 93), **Poverty** (p. 103), **Modern Social Change** (p. 106), **Scapes** (pp. 109–10), and **Politics and Resources** (pp. 117–18) as periodic quizzes.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
8 and 9 (6 to 10 instructional hours)	**Writing I: Independent Tasks** *Students will:* Understand what an independent writing prompt is asking for. Develop strategies for planning a response to the prompt. Manage time to produce an effective essay in only 30 minutes. Analyze strengths and weaknesses of sample written answers. Examine features of grammar and style likely to be useful in writing about experiences or preferences. Understand criteria likely to be applied by iBT raters. Recognize strengths and weaknesses in their own practice responses. Learn basic computer keyboarding skills to format a response.	Pages 119–44	In pairs or small groups, students do exercises about planning and organizing ideas (pp. 120–26). Discuss what makes a controlling statement (thesis statement or topic sentence) effective. Use the "question" technique (p. 130–32) to practice choosing good support. Practice formatting a written response on a computer. The prompt on p. 139 can be an end-of-unit quiz. Teachers use criteria on p. 140 to evaluate student writing. Students compare their responses to samples (pp. 140–44) and discuss rater comments.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
10 and 11 (6 to 10 instructional hours)	**Writing II: Integrated Tasks** *Students will:* Recognize what an integrated writing prompt is asking for. Synthesize appropriate information from readings and lectures. Accurately paraphrase important parts of source material. Analyze strengths and weaknesses of sample essays. Examine features of grammar and style likely to be useful in fact-oriented writing. Understand criteria likely to be applied by iBT raters. Recognize strengths and weaknesses in their own practice responses. Pay special attention to integrating information from *both* sources of input, since failure to do so is heavily penalized in actual iBT scoring.	Pages 144–78	Use audio CD for group listening when required by a prompt. Use audio transcripts for the Writing section (pp. 260–63) as necessary. The practice prompt and input on pp. 173–74 can be used as an end-of-unit quiz. Teachers use criteria on p. 160 to evaluate individual student responses to this prompt. Students compare their responses to samples (pp. 174–78) and discuss rater comments.

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
12 and 13 (6 to 10 instructional hours)	**Speaking** *Students will:* Synthesize appropriate information from readings and lectures. Accurately paraphrase important parts of source material. Analyze strengths and weaknesses of sample spoken responses. Examine transition phrases that effectively signal the organization of speech. Understand criteria likely to be applied by iBT raters. Recognize strengths and weaknesses in their own practice responses.	Pages 179–208	Use audio CD for group listening when required by a prompt. Use audio transcripts of input (pp. 264–65) as necessary. Discuss the difference between independent and integrated speaking tasks. What English structures are likely to be useful in each type? Question 4 on p. 200 can be used as a quiz. Teachers use criteria on p. 196 to evaluate student responses. Students compare their Question 4 responses to samples (pp. 201–2) and discuss rater comments **Note:** Sample responses by students have been transcribed in the chapter but were not recorded on the audio CD. They are available at *www.press.umich.edu/esl/testprep/ michtoefl/.*

Week(s)	Unit Focus/Aims	Sections of *The Michigan Guide* (text)	Possible Activities/Approaches
14 (3 to 5 instructional hours)	**Summary, Score Reporting, and Final Assessment** *Students will:* Consolidate their understanding of how EAP skills development applies to the new TOEFL®. Understand how iBT scores will be assigned and reported. Take a practice version of the iBT.	Multi-Skills Practice Test, pp. 209–38 <u>Note:</u> *The Michigan Guide to Teaching EAP Skills* also contains (a) two 60-minute mini-tests that could be used as a practice final (b) two complete multi-skills practice tests that could be used for a final exam (which students won't have seen unless they have somehow obtained *The Michigan Guide to Teaching EAP Skills*)	Look again at student skill inventories (produced during first week of term). How would students assess their skills now? Students take the Multi-Skills Practice Test as a "final exam." They can check their own reading/listening scores in the answer key. Teachers assign approximate grades to tests. See *The Michigan Guide to Teaching EAP Skills,* Chapter 4, for scoring procedures. Teachers should evaluate writing/speaking passages according to grading criteria on pp. 140, 160, 192, and 196.

How the iBT Is Scored

Score reports for the new TOEFL® will include a total score and four skill scores, as shown in the chart that follows. Each skill section is worth a maximum of 30 points. The maximum total score is 120.

Possible Scores on the iBT	
Listening	17
Reading	20
Speaking	14
Writing	19
Total	70

No skills section always has exactly 30 questions. Each section's raw scores are converted to a number out of 30 by means of conversion charts drawn up by ETS. For each form of the Internet-based TOEFL, four conversion charts will be used: one for listening, one for reading, one for speaking, and one for writing.

Listening and Reading Score Conversion

The number of questions in the Listening section or Reading section varies from one test form to another. One form may have 28 listening questions and 36 reading questions, another may have 34 listening questions and 31 reading questions, and so on. This is one reason why the perfect raw score varies from test to test, making conversion charts necessary.

Also, some questions are more difficult than others. Using data from field tests, ETS applies "weighting" factors to give more credit for some answers than for others. Test-takers cannot know which questions are heavily weighted and which are not, so they cannot compute their own raw scores on the iBT, even if they somehow guess which answers they got right.

Finally, some listening and reading questions have multi-part answers. In many of these cases, partial credit is given for a partly correct answer. For example, a prose summary question in the Reading section requires the student to select three out of five sentences. The directions tell the student that the question is worth two points. A student who correctly selects all three sentences

scores the full two points, but a student who selects only two sentences correctly still gets one point. (An answer with fewer than two correct scores no points.) Other questions may be worth more than two points and may use different systems for assigning partial credit.

In summary, the scoring for the Reading and Listening sections involves a lot of elements that vary from test form to test form and question to question. Therefore, each form of the test has its own conversion charts for these sections. These charts are not made public.

Speaking and Writing Score Conversion

Each written answer will be rated from 0 to 5 according to the appropriate rubric (set of directions for raters)—either the independent-task rubric or the integrated-task rubric. There are two writing tasks, so the maximum number of points in any Writing section will always be 10. Each spoken answer will be rated on a scale of 0 to 4 according to a speaking rubric. There are six speaking tasks, so the maximum number of points in any Speaking section will always be 24. There is no weighting of answers in the Speaking or Writing section; every task in the section is worth the same number of points. This consistency from form to form and task to task makes it a lot easier to convert a raw score into a score out of 30.

The raw scores in writing and speaking are converted to scores on a 30-point scale. In writing, half-point raw scores are possible because the scores of two raters may average out that way. Each question in the Speaking section is normally evaluated by only one rater, and the scores are added up to get a number out of 24. This is always a whole number because there is no averaging of scores in the Speaking section.

Estimating Scores for Practice Tests

For information about scoring the specific mini-tests and practice test items, please see *www.press.umich.edu/esl/testprep/michtoefl/*.

Acceptable Score Levels

Each university or other institution that accepts TOEFL® scores is free to set its own admission standards. Students should check with their prospective colleges or universities to find out the cut points in each of the skills and for the test total.

More Practice for the Reading Section of the iBT

Tips for Teaching Reading for EAP

Reading for the iBT, and reading for academic purposes, are rigorous tasks. The reading passages in the iBT are long, between 500 and 800 words. Each passage is followed by 12–14 comprehension questions. Test-takers have 20 minutes to complete each reading and answer the questions. In sum, test-takers face three to five readings, followed by a total of 36–70 questions, in a 60–100-minute period. Even while studying at home, few students would force themselves to concentrate without a break for this period of time.

What's more, the passages and their questions are complex. Their topics range across academic fields: biology, sociology, anthropology, geology, and so on. Test-takers must move nimbly from one topic to the next. Further, the TOEFL® reading passages include complex ideas, often presenting competing points of view, interrelated ideas, and mentioning sources of material. In other words, it is not sufficient for test-takers to track the meaning of individual sentences in iBT readings. Instead, they must integrate the meanings presented in the passage and understand the passage as a whole. They must understand the rhetorical functions of information in the passage. They need to recognize not only a passage's surface meaning but also the implied arguments of the author.

To hone these skills, students need to practice reading complex material. They need to spend a lot of time developing the skills of any efficient reader, such as predicting, skimming, scanning, reading, and reviewing.

EAP readers can benefit from reading a lot of academic material—material used in college textbooks and other undergraduate course materials. This type of reading will familiarize readers with the vocabulary of written academic discourse and scholarly presentation of written ideas. Academic readings often balance competing ideas or contain digressions. In other words, they are complex readings that are meant to convey information in some academic field.

Last but not least, readers of academic material will recognize the need to focus on the development of vocabulary, since strong vocabulary relates to better reading comprehension. An extensive vocabulary can also boost a student's scores on the listening, writing, and speaking sections of the test. Twenty to thirty percent of the questions about every iBT reading passage are vocabulary questions, and they are always in the same format. Since this format offers a point of predictability among other, unpredictable question types, this is one place where the teacher can promote automaticity in test-taking. Saving time here will save students time for the global-comprehension questions. A strength of *The Michigan Guide* is the amount of vocabulary practiced in the Building Skills section—we offer practice, practice, and more practice so students have strategies for dealing with vocabulary first.