

The Care and Feeding of Premeds



**American Physical Society
Denver, 2009**

Stephanie Magleby
Brigham Young University

Personality Test Questions



- a) “I have a natural talent for influencing people”
- b) “I am not good at influencing people”
- a) “I can read people like a book”
- b) “People are sometimes hard to understand”
- a) “I am going to be a great person”
- b) “I hope I am going to be successful”



KNOW

KNOW YOURSELF.

*Your mind is vast. Your heart is wide.
Your soul is deep.
Don't let anyone make you feel small so they can feel big.
Your power is within you.
You are extraordinary.
Know this.*

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A strong, positive
self-image
is the best possible
preparation for
success.

—Dr. Jean Twenge



It's okay to be
proud of yourself

It's okay to be proud of yourself

Baby Boomers vs. Generation Me

Question authority

Self-fulfillment

Journey, searching

Change the world

Protests/group sessions

Abstraction

Spirituality

Philosophy of life

What authority?

TMI

Already there

Follow your dreams

TV/Web

Practicality

Things

Feeling good about yourself

Baby Boomers vs. Generation Me

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Feeling good about yourself

Entitlement



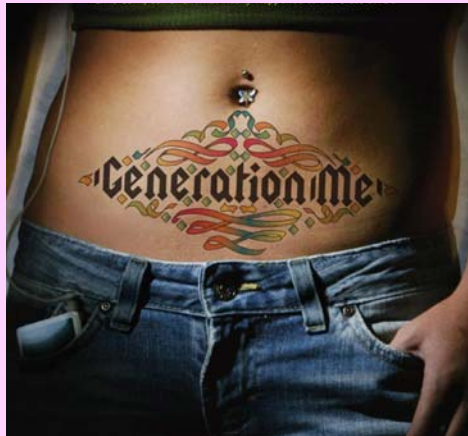
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= ?

Self-Absorbed

Desperately Competitive



+



= **High Maintenance**

Studenticuss Premedicuss:

An exotic species in a Harsh Environment



1. Species Survival Cost
2. Species Survival Rate
3. Species Requirements:
 - a. Near perfect GPA
 - b. Letters of recommendation
 - c. Shadowing
 - d. Research
 - e. “Roundedness”
 - f. Leadership
 - g. Community Service

Cost of Survival:

15 to 18 schools

\$195 for the primary application, \$30 for each successive application

\$25 - \$200 for the secondary application

Total interview costs: Roughly \$17,000



Odds of Survival:

Nationally for the recruiting seasons of 2002 – 2007:

46%

According to AMCAS, *the American Medical College Application Service*

<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/medicine/education-faq/part1/section-4.html>, October 15th, 2008

Oral interview: Dave Kaiser, Director of the Pre-professional - Health Counseling Office at BYU.



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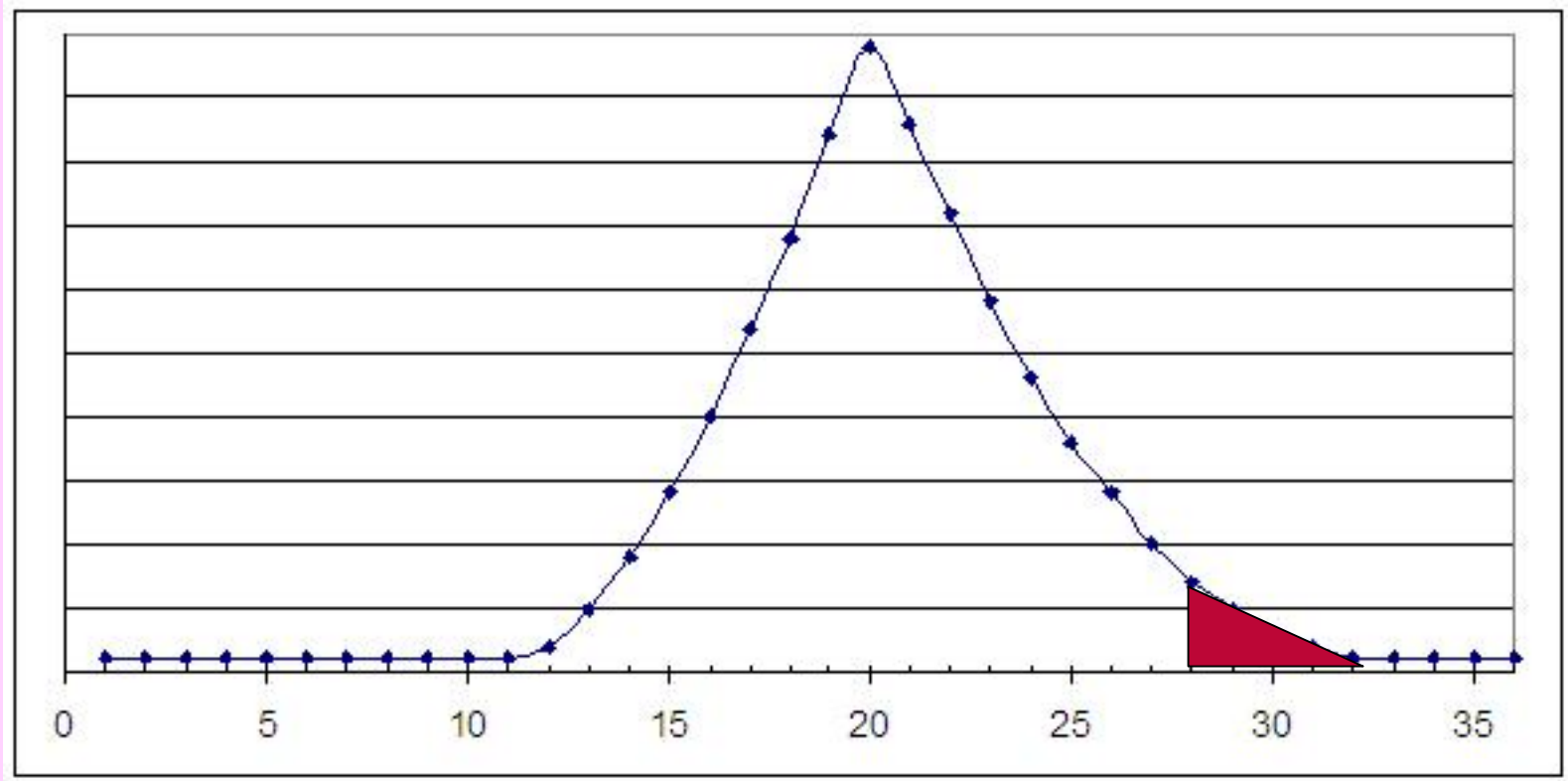


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It's okay to be proud of yourself

GPA

2007 ACT Score Distribution



Self Absorbed and Desperately Competitive

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenefees.html>

Self-Absorbed



1. Expect to be given choice.
2. Expect to have a voice in the process.
3. Expect praise.
4. Expect to be the best.
5. "I am the exception to every rule!"

Self-Absorbed

Expect to be given choice.

Solution: Give them all the choices you can.

Examples: Exams with or without equations.

Test out.



Self-Absorbed

Expect to have a voice in the process.



- Solution: Let them (within reason).
- Solution: Show them you listened.
- Solution: “That doesn’t work for me.”
- Solution: TA wall.
- Solution: A thick skin.
- Solution: Email me . . .
- Solution: I’ll get back to you . . .
- Solution: Flame back with humor.
- Solution: Just in time quizzes/lectures.
- Solution: Have a student give “the talk”.

When all else fails: “This is not a democracy!”

Self-Absorbed



Expect praise.

Solution: Give them skills to be proud of and then **HEAP ON THE PRAISE!**

Example: Congratulatory emails.

“Well done!”

“I’m proud of you!”

“Call home and brag!”

Solution: Couch criticism as “professionalism training”.

Solution: Sandwich criticism

Self-Absorbed



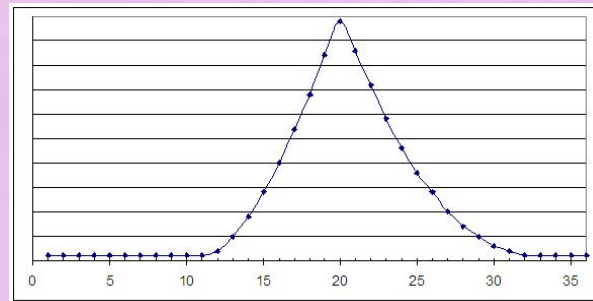
Expect to be the best.

Solution: “This is what it takes to be the best. . .

Solution: Quote Batman
“It is not who you are underneath, but what you do that defines you.”

–*Batman Begins*, 2005

Solution: Reality checks



Self-Absorbed

“I am the exception to every rule.”

Solution: “Life is messy” points.

Examples: “I would be happy to give you an extension on your homework because you fell asleep at your computer before pushing ‘submit’. Please come by my office at your convenience to formally relinquish your L.I.M. points.”



Desperately Competitive



1. Will jump through any hoop.
2. Cheating / “Resourcefulness”
3. Grade Grubbers
4. Expect perfection from themselves **and you!**

Desperately Competitive

Will jump through any hoop.

Give them lots of hoops! Every legitimate resource you can find.

Interactive quizzes.

Supplemental problems.

Professionalism sells.

HW presentation grading.

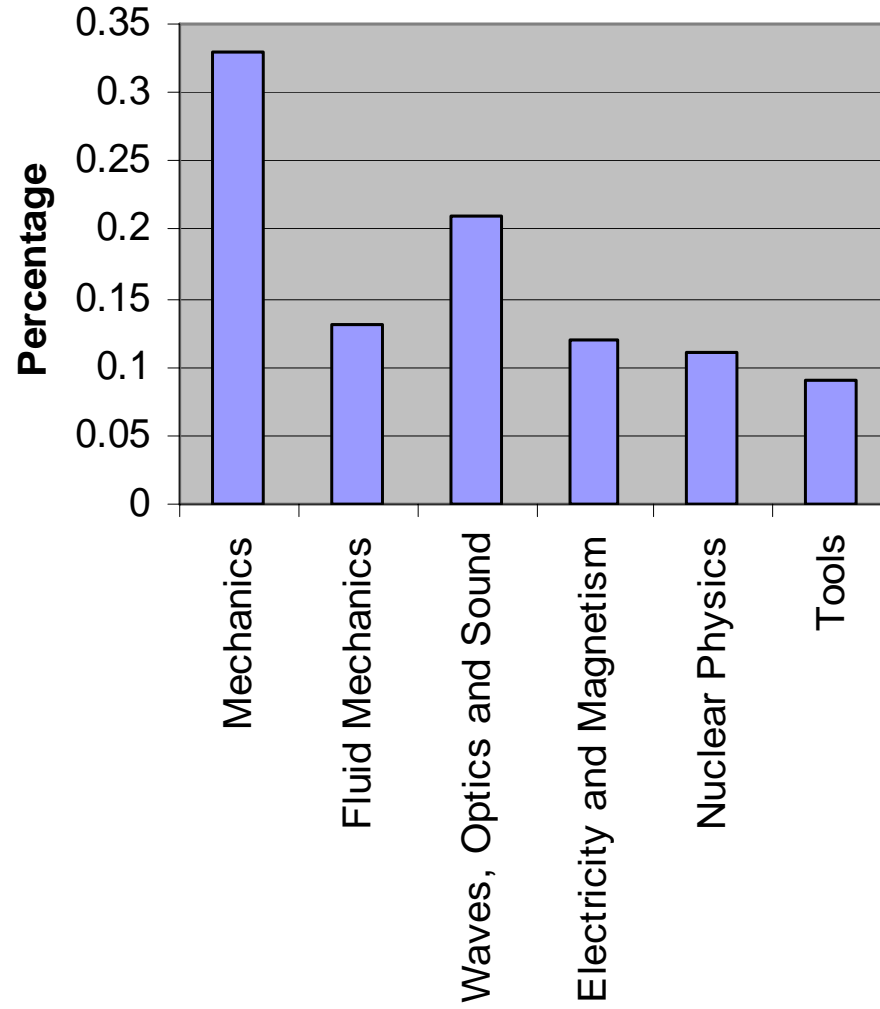
MCAT-in-your-face.



B+ = Failure



MCAT Composition by Topic



Desperately Competitive

Grade grubbers

'Life is messy'

Fewer grades.

Transparency *with round up*

Non-cumulative final.

TA wall

Airtight Syllabus

Be direct: **“Now you’re fishing!”**

Unprofessional Behavior Tax



B+ = Failure

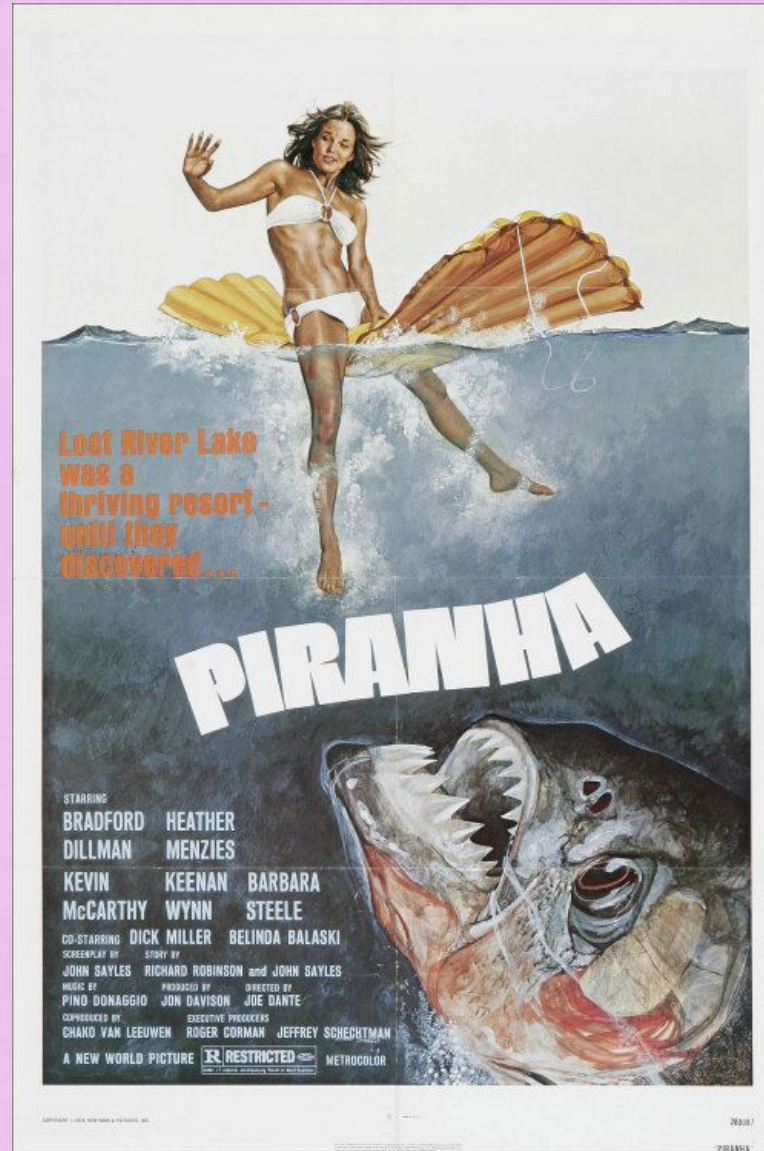
Desperately Competitive

Expect perfection

Avoid “Blood in the Water”



Avoid “Blood in the Water”



Desperately Competitive



Expect perfection

Avoid “Blood in the Water”

Handle mistakes quickly and efficiently.

Desperately Competitive

Cheating / “Resourcefulness”

TMI. Test files.

Tight security

No note sheets

Invoke the mantra: “MCAT, MCAT”

**Expect every student to
be honest.**

**Assume every student
cheats.**



HIGH MAINTENANCE



“Get to know people, especially professors, advisors, administrators, and other employees. It is never too early to cultivate good relationships.

Initiate contact by going to their offices with questions or comments.

Get to know professors **even if you are in a class of three hundred students.”**

From BYU website: *THE KEYS TO GAINING A PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP*

HIGH MAINTENANCE



Letters of Recommendation:

I have found it necessary to limit my writing of letters of recommendation to only those students who have worked closely with me (TAs, Graders, etc).

“But . . . But . . . But . . .
I *need* an A”



HIGH MAINTENANCE

‘Compute your grade’ homework.

Homework Zero

Wired



Use it!

U-tube! Mythbusters! On-line simulations! Email. Music.
?Texting? Blackboard.

Short attention spans: Clickers.

On-line everything: syllabus, orientation, HW, blogs, forums

Impatient: Post grades ASAP. Return emails quickly.

TOP THREE



**Attitude Readjustment: Advocate,
not Adversary**

Just Say No to Letters of Recommendation

'Life is Messy' Points

Perspective

JUMPSTART

BY ROBB ARMSTRONG





STEPHANIE A. MAGLEBY, Department of Physics & Astronomy, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602. Most physics instructors will at some point in their teaching career face a room full of students bound for medical or dental school. This particular student clientele presents a host of distinctive challenges. My presentation will discuss insights gained while teaching premed sections of algebra-based College Physics over the last ten semesters. Topics will include syllabus structure, quiz techniques, testing strategies, letters of recommendation and how to get a good teaching evaluation from a pre-med.