



## Selecting the Top Student: Key Indices

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### Dear Editor,

In most countries, one day a year is celebrated as “Student Day” in universities to encourage top students. There are undoubtedly different views and indices for selecting top students. The key question is, however, what features distinguish top students as far as professional education is concerned. If the indices and features used in such a selection are correct, top students will be encouraged to develop those features and act as role models for other students. Moreover, other students will be encouraged to develop similar characteristics through a triggering of their enthusiasm and sense of competition. A proper scale makes the correct selection of the top student possible. Can a long list of good characteristics, including lots of studying, obeying the rules, discipline, exercise, good morals, and honesty, be used as the basis for scoring when selecting top students? Definitely no, since these are the values that are expected from all members of a transcendental community, and they are not basically considered the professional indicators of students.

The standard design of educational programs and hidden curricula prepare students for assuming occupational and social responsibilities in future careers throughout their course of study (1). As students become more capable, they also become more distinguished. What are the indices for measuring students’ capability for assuming and successfully fulfilling their future responsibilities? The present letter aims to respond to this question using years of educational and research experience and extensive interactions with students.

The following three characteristics make students more successful and distinguished in their professional and social future compared to their peers and colleagues.

1- Scientific and technical knowledge and expertise in their field of study: This is the most basic expectation the society has of a university graduate. What manager welcomes unknowledgeable experts or those with low literacy to his or her team?

2- The ability to criticize, analyze, research, and innovate: Top students know how to analyze a set of raw data,

analyze their findings and observations, and scientifically criticize, if necessary, common views and practices. They know how to raise new scientific hypotheses or questions following the acquisition of scientific facts. Upon observing the existing processes, they also know how to critically and wisely propose new ideas and test the possibility of putting them into practice to better implement these processes or replace them (2).

In today’s university rankings, it is clear that universities whose basic mission is research have a higher position compared to universities that focus only on education. The same distinction is true when comparing a researcher student with a student to whom research is alien.

3- The ability to establish healthy relationships and communicate with others: Top students are able to establish appropriate and healthy relationships with their surrounding environment. They can easily share their ideas with their colleagues, teachers, audiences across the country, and even people around the world. Top students develop the tools necessary to create the right communication and interactions (3). In today’s global village, these students are successful in establishing face-to-face communication as much as they are capable of effectively using cyberspace to communicate. They can verbally criticize their teacher’s statements or write an official letter for a rational request to the head of the faculty as easily as they can use emails, discussion forums, virtual networks, weblogs, and other cyberspace facilities to raise their scientific questions, state their views, and publish their research findings. They are experts in using conventional software packages. Not only can they use common software to record, report, and analyze their research, they are also able to share their knowledge and scientific reports with their colleagues, teachers, and audiences in cyberspace by producing multimedia clips, if necessary. It is clear that these students are skilled in using information and communication technology and also English language in these types of interactions.

Students sometimes combine these basic elements throughout their study, namely scientific literacy, critical

thought, and ability to interact, to promote their position in university relations from student to a valuable teacher assistant in an unofficial manner. Faculty members definitely boast of having such students, since they have witnessed how these students can initiate novel projects, including educational, research, and social projects, in their environment, through scientific, professional, and intellectual cooperation. These students are especially distinguished in terms of being able to clearly form their professional life just from their student age and favorably effect on and play a role in the surrounding community. They should be honored, their abilities should be trusted, and their ideas should be nurtured. In fact, they are the main cause of teachers' success and, if they are managed well, they can serve as promoters of a university. These students are "top students" in an academic setting that primarily aims at professional excellence and they should be encour-

aged and introduced to the academic community.

### Supplementary Material

Supplementary material(s) is available [here](#) [To read supplementary materials, please refer to the journal website and open PDF/HTML].

### References

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