

Unrealistic Promises

By Mick Rosenblum

We live in a world of implied promises and quick fixes, of companies and organizations that play on the misassumptions of unsuspecting customers. Nowhere is this more evident than in the world of SAT and ACT courses, thousands of which have flooded the internet and saturated the market over the last several decades.

An astonishing number of these courses are closed-ended, that is they have a specific ending date at which time the course is over and the student is, allegedly, ready to take the test. This concept is particularly gratifying to students and parents, because it promises success within a specific, limited period of time. Unfortunately, such promises, as appealing as they are, may be little more than sales pitches, simply because each student acquires the necessary skills at his or her own pace. Some students may be ready to take the SAT or ACT in just a few weeks or months while others take longer to prep.

Indeed, a course's promise of a reasonably high score within a few short weeks or months would be as unrealistic as a piano teacher's promise of musical mastery within a specific period of time. Sadly, however, every year I encounter student after student who, after paying thousands of dollars for such courses, are sorely disappointed in the results, and may have simply given up in frustration believing that the student does not have what it takes to master the SAT or ACT.

The real issue, however, whether or not the course instructors monitor a student's progress and can determine when a student's practice scores on *genuine* SAT or ACT tests (not mock or otherwise phony versions) indicate that the student is ready to take an official test. So please call me before you subscribe to any SAT or ACT program . . . my advice is free and can save you a great deal of time, money, and frustration.