

A Conversation with Leo Mei

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In May of 2020, Leo Mei (11) took the AP Psychology exam administered by College Board. He ended up being one of only six people in the world to make a perfect score on the test. Achieving a perfect score on any AP test requires dedication and hard work. There were many strategies Mei employed when studying for his AP Psychology exam.

When asked about how he prepared for the exam, Mei replied, “The thing that helped me the most was reading the assigned textbook throughout the entire year.” Mei continued to say that he studied last-minute one month before the exam, and that he wishes he could have done his studying differently. He was very stressed about the exam but explained that every test-taker experiences stress before the test begins. Once it does, the worries, “simply fade out, and the only thing left is the test.”

When asked what he thought the hardest part of the test was, Mei said it was the various theories of development. The theories of development are an assortment of theories about how

the human brain develops over time. “Since much of psychology is still up for debate, there’s not a singular theory that is taught; we must learn several,” said Mei. He went on to explain that each theory has its own unique workings that the AP Psyche students had to be familiar with. “It is extremely easy to mix them up, which makes the section very, very frustrating.” On the other hand, Mei found that the easiest part of the exam was the section on the biological perspective of psychology. He

said that most people might have found it hard, but it came easy to him. “I found it much easier to understand how, say, action potentials work... than how the conditioning of mice works,” Mei explained.

At the end of the interview, Mei stated that, “AP Psychology, is one of those courses that is absolutely essential.” He said that the human mind is a crucial part of the world, and that everyone can benefit from learning about it. Mei described how it is also important to learn about mental illness, especially in a culture that, “largely misunder-

stands and belittles mental illness.” He explained that it is of the utmost importance that we, as a society, truly see mental illnesses as what they are. Mei continued, “AP Psychology is one of those classes that will have practical use no matter what path you take in life. As humans, we are ultimately controlled by our minds; it is something that you will use no matter what career you enter, no matter what you choose to become – if not, then the world becomes a badly-written dystopian story.”



Above: Mei smiles for the camera at the press conference highlighting his achievement. Picture courtesy of