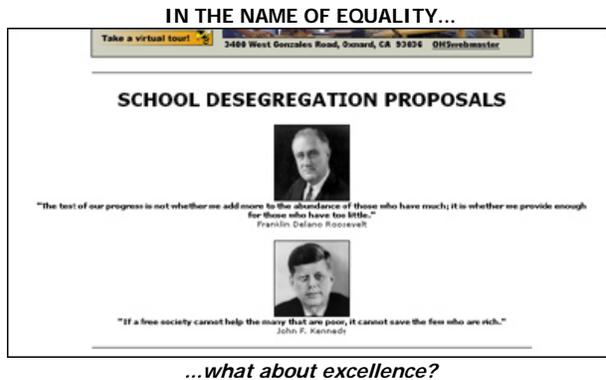


Non Schola Sed Vita Decimos!

"Excellence" and "Equality" -- An Uneasy Relationship

By [Mr. Geib](#) on April 10, 2012 8:08 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(105\)](#)



ACADEMIC EQUITY: FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS THE NEEDS OF THE COLLECTIVE

"Resolved, that starting next year we at Foothill Technology High School will eradicate all 'tracking' in academic classes whereby 'advanced' or 'honors' and 'college-prep' students attend different classes with different teachers with different academic goals. This change will help to reduce and eventually erase the racial, economic, and social inequalities that plague our schools and our entire society. 'Tracking,' indeed, is undemocratic and un-American. Next year, it will end at FTHS."

What would you think if you heard this news, my students? What would be your first gut reaction? Your later conclusion, after you had thought about it?

Think about these assumptions: **If so many of the strongest students self-segregate themselves into separate classes, does this not simply reinforce the existing gaps in achievement in our schools? The intelligent and the ambitious move far forward in separate classes, while the other "non-advanced" classes (with at least some unambitious and unprepared students) get left behind? At any school how much does a motivated and focused student owe to those less strong academically and less motivated?**

Our blogsite posting this time around will focus on this main question:

To what extent should we as a community minimize the FREEDOM of high achieving students to choose advanced classes in the name of equality of all students? Should we abolish Advanced Placement classes in the name of academic EQUALITY?

What do you think? How much should school be about maximizing the unique potential of each individual student in their pursuit of book knowledge and academic excellence? How much should school be about looking after one's neighbor and working for the good of ALL students, and especially the weakest students -- focusing on others, instead of oneself? Can one have both? Yes? No? To what extent? Should school be about learning how to get along with others? Building equality and "democracy"? Struggling for social justice for all in the community? Or should school be primarily about each individual learning "reading, writing, and arithmetic"? Learning academic content? Acquiring the intellectual skills for success in school and adult life? Getting that letter of acceptance from that prestigious university your senior year?

Why don't we get rid of AP classes and academic "tracking" in schools? Should we integrate, by court order if necessary, high-achieving and low-achieving schools in neighboring communities? Should we bus kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds to other area school to ensure racial and ethnic diversity in school populations? Why

About this Entry

This page contains a single entry by [Mr. Geib](#) published on *April 10, 2012 8:08 AM*.

["Unity" and/or "Diversity"?](#) was the previous entry in this blog.

["Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."](#) is the next entry in this blog.

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should the quality of education one receives depend on one's zip code? Why don't we force the most veteran and most highly qualified teachers to work in the lowest achieving and most difficult schools? Restrict the FREEDOM of those teachers to choose their schools in the name of EQUALITY of academic offerings? To ensure a measure of academic equity in ALL schools? Should we even go so far as to ban private schools in the name of equality and ensuring similar educational access?

What do you think? What should be the policy for our community in these matters?

Please publish your comments by 8:00 a.m. on Friday April 13th, 2012. This discussion will serve to prepare the ground for the [educational equity Socratic dialogue](#) we will hold in class tomorrow.

IS ADVANCED PLACEMENT "ELITIST"?



"More money is put into prisons than into schools. That, in itself, is the description of a nation bent on suicide. I mean, what is more precious to us than our own children? We are going to build a lot more prisons if we do not deal with the schools and their inequalities."
Jonathan Kozol



"What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy."
John Dewey

What is YOUR opinion?

105 Comments

Christopher Hanna | [April 10, 2012 9:42 PM](#)

I received a call slip a few weeks ago inviting me to what is called an Ad Hoc meeting. It's basically a survey that is conducted on a variety of diverse students in which Mr. Bova asks us what we like about the school, and what could be improved. After (legally) ditching my math class and arriving to the conference room, the Ad Hoc started, and as I listened to my fellow students and looked around the meeting table, I realized something quickly: I was likely the only one who has ever taken an advanced course. I was probably the only one who has ever taken the initiative to take a harder class, and frankly, probably ever will. Mr. Bova then asked us what we liked about the school, and I replied, "I like how the school, teachers and curriculum push us to achieve more, instead of just giving us the bare minimum to graduate." Then Mr. Bova asked what we didn't like, and one student said, "On a personal note, I don't like College Prep English. It's not the teacher's fault, it's the course itself." The girl next to me then chimed in, saying "I don't like how AP classes are trophied and idolized, and how College Prep is just there. I feel that AP is an elitist club that looks down upon the rest of us, and they think they are better than us just because they do more work. I think that College Prep should be put up more, and its students should be more rewarded or something." The entire room was nodding in agreement, and, like a Democrat at a Republican Convention, I sensed voicing my views on her statement would not be appreciated.

Having been in both AP and College Prep, I understand where these students are coming from. No one wants to be compared to an overachiever, and at a competitive school full of 4.0+ GPA's, it can feel like being constantly contrasted with academic giants. Not taking BioScience? Someone's not getting into an Ivy League college. AP Calculus not in the schedule for next year? Kiss half the UC schools goodbye. Not a fan of Extra-Curriculars? My crystal ball shows Community College in your future. Something should be done, but I can assure you that AP and College Prep integration is not the answer.

Let's picture a druggie from a College Prep class, shall we? They fall asleep in english, history is stupid because it already happened, and math functions are just dope (not the good kind, either). Now, introduce the prissy, smart girl whom cries over a tub of rocky road ice cream for hours on end whenever a test returns lower than 100%. To her, A stands for Alright, B is Barely average, and C's only happen to ugly fat chicks whose parents don't love them. If Prissy and Druggie are pushed into the same classroom, and the teacher then explains the homework, who is going to write notes and who is going to be blasting the latest Skrillex album from their cleverly concealed earphones? When a pop

quiz is handed out, who already has 5 sharpened #2 pencils and who is going to bury themselves in their sweater? When the teacher hones in on one student for a quick answer, who has already memorized the entire chapter word for word, and who is just going to blankly stare into space for an eternity and eventually mumble, "I don't know?" What is motivating Druggie to put away the syringes and read the books assigned? What competition does Prissy have that would keep her motivated and challenged? The whole point of high school is to help us prepare for the future of being an adult in America. However, as any sane adult will tell you, the real America doesn't exactly try to build up underachievers or those who only do the bare minimum. Just like how being successful is a matter of undertaking the right opportunities, AP alike is an optional choice that both pushes and rewards more than College Prep. If we change the school system so that everyone is more or less equal, do we have to change our colleges as well? After that, do we change the business world, too? Should Wall Street be a place for Hobo Hank as well as Successful Steve? At what point do we separate the promising from the lacking? To me, this sounds like the beginning of a communistic society where no one is left behind, but at the same time, no one is let ahead and beyond. Is that really America, the Land of the Promise and Prosperity?

I have absolutely nothing against College Prep classes, nor do I have anything against AP courses. I don't think that everyone in College Prep is a druggie, nor do I believe that every AP girl is crying with Ben & Jerry every week. I don't think Foothill needs to integrate AP and College Prep, nor do I think we should change the school system. You can only motivate a student so much, just as you can only try to improve lower classes with smart kids. Foothill already has great programs like FIRE that help (and sometimes force) needy students to get help from more knowledgeable students, and FTHS doesn't need 3 hours of that every day. If we want to PREPare students for adult life in America, we have to show them that ADVANCing to harder challenges and more difficult opportunities is the best way to PLACE better careers in today's modern world. After all, who would want a community in which everyone is the next Bill Gates?

DISCLAIMER: Christopher Hanna does not endorse regularly taking illegal drugs or crying over gallons of ice cream. They are both bad for you, and can both lead to serious complications later in life. Please, be Above the Influence and Scoop Wisely. Thank you.

Mr. Geib replied to [comment from Christopher Hanna](#) | April 10, 2012 10:40 PM

Bravo!

Luke Ballmer replied to [comment from Christopher Hanna](#) | April 10, 2012 11:02 PM

Yeah, I don't really see a whole lot anyone could add to this topic past what you've just written.

Caitlin Trude replied to [comment from Christopher Hanna](#) | April 11, 2012 6:33 PM

This is so great.

Adam Braver replied to [comment from Christopher Hanna](#) | April 11, 2012 11:00 PM

To me, this blog has touched upon one of my most passionate beliefs, and in order for me to properly express it, I shall first start off by painting a scene of the wild, urban jungle in which many of us adolescents (and animals) call "home."

Imagine a vast, ever-expanding city in the heart of a prosperous yet struggling nation. It is a city, where skyscrapers are quite literally piercing the clouds that are mocking them, and where gravel is more commonly stepped on than any single patch of grass. Entrepreneurs are flourishing, but so are the homeless and the struggling. Indeed, it is a city of many contradictions, and one in which not just humans, but also dogs run amiss through the streets; and among these great canine fellows, there resides two groups: the young, lost puppies, and the powerful, knowledgeable dogs (yes, puppies and dogs are of the same race, but please look over that small factor for the point of this blog). The puppies, inexperienced, and often without a proper path to seek, instead walk in the shadows of the elite, top dogs; dogs, who seek to become the best of the best, who wish to rule above all others and desire to profoundly change the world in one way or another. The dogs, who are the leaders, and the puppies, who just happen to be the followers.

Perhaps this may sound cheesy, or canned, or whatever you want to say, but for the longest time, I used to identify myself among the lost puppies. I never wanted to lead

people towards some greater goal or change; instead, I wanted to be constantly guided by the "top dogs" around me. I was seemingly unmotivated, and largely just wanted to laze about and ponder over ideas, yet I never actually wanted to implement them. All in all, I thought of myself as failure.

It used to be shameful for me to admit it as well (I am now indifferent to the matter, of course), but just last year, I was a college prep kid. I was taught at a lower level than all of the honors students were taught at the time, and as my sophomore year began to pass by, I began to hate it. I had no vendetta against the college prep students or what they were learning; I simply felt like the chocolate-covered raisin among all of the regular raisins (I really hope that didn't sound offensive). I stuck out in my classes, and that was because I always wanted to learn more. That was what my sophomore year did to me: it gave me the motivation to want to discover more of the facts for myself, and it threw upon me this unforeseen feeling to want to be among the top dogs of the school. It was around that time period that I told myself I needed to ascend the ladder of my adolescent life and climb towards the higher step of enrolling in Advanced Placement classes the following year. Now, I can say for a fact that despite the elitism of it all, I certainly do not regret it.

Here was the thing though: I was never forced to enroll in the rigorous AP curriculum. I chose it for myself. It was my decision to make, and in my opinion, I made the right choice. But that was for me. I can say that, coming from a college prep environment, to force the iron hand upon the general college prep population to enroll in AP classes would be a disaster. In fact, it is absolutely preposterous! So many CP students, who were already unmotivated in their classes, would become even more unenthusiastic just from the thought of taking AP classes. You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink. Please do not force your will upon others. Not only is it undemocratic, but it is illogical. Let the individual decide, not the coerced collective. It is ultimately up to the lost puppy whether or not it wishes to mature into a proud, powerful dog (particularly, a top dog). Let it continue that way, for I can practically guarantee you that if it does, then the seemingly few ex-college prep students who decide to take the AP courses will ultimately have a beneficial role to play in the overall AP curriculum rather than a negative one.

Adam Braver replied to [comment from Adam Braver](#) | [April 11, 2012 11:01 PM](#)

Whoops, that was my blog, sorry.

Alea Grundler replied to [comment from Christopher Hanna](#) | [April 12, 2012 5:03 PM](#)

You are just awesome. I love this blog!

Alexander Koch | [April 10, 2012 11:07 PM](#)

"Strange it is that schools spend VASTLY more time and energy on the students who disrupt class and care little if anything about their academic performance, while many students who follow all the rules and give their all to their teachers and their studies pass through the system seemingly unnoticed." Sound familiar? This was an excerpt from Mr. Geib's letter to our parents during the Farch madness. The "students who disrupt class and care little" can be easily generalized to fit the reputation of college prep or regular high school class students, while the academic over achievers are clearly the insane honors and AP students. So tell me again why the heck we have decided to put the best with the rest? For equality's sake? Because it is democratic? Nah, not for me.

Equality over individual achievement. The benefit of many over the advancement of the few. That is the very definition of communism. In no way can a collective, standardized education be called democratic. That is not even up for debate. In my eyes, democracy simply stands for voting and freedom. I want to bear my ability to pick and choose to its fullest potential and that includes being able to select challenging courses over simpler ones. In school they educate us about the value of free will and the vote. By cramming every type of person, tall or short, intuitive or dull, Mexican or German, into one classroom just for sake of equality you undermine our entire national history. Our country was carried on the backs of individual achievement, forged in the fires of capitalism and sculpted into the beauty we now call the American democracy. If we killed academic diversity and forced communism in the classrooms that would be equivalent to the Hitler Youth teaching their disciples to love the ballot box or having Mao's Little Red Book to love private banks and such.

Killing off AP and honors is impossible. Dummying some people down, like spreading the wealth evenly, making everyone a little less rich but thus increasing the level of equality is extremely unwise. Hell, it is stupid and it will not work. Some might argue that by placing the best and brightest with the uninterested and unmotivated will allow some to have a spark of interest ignited in them, but couldn't the same be held true for the opposite? I remember in 7th grade I had the pleasure of spending time with the regular "not GATE" kids for english and social studies. The atmosphere was quite unlike what is considered normal between us "intellectuals" in Amex. I still remember the teacher, Mrs. J. I don't know if she enjoyed it but she vocally disciplined our class daily. And I mean daily. And the students just hollered back. Those poor substitutes who had to deal with the endless shouting and lollygagging. It was the first time I was familiarized with the drug scene. Those kids really did not care, I can assure you. Don't go off and say, "Well there are plenty of kids who are in regular classes who just can't cope with the struggles of accelerated learning and they genuinely try!" In that class there was no god. It was bad. I told myself everyday to get the heck out of this class. I was absolutely overjoyed when I noticed I would be spending my 8th grade with Mrs. J once again but this time in the company of the GATE kids. I clearly remember the one instance when Mrs. J harshly disciplined the class. They were silent for the rest of the period and I just sat in my seat and smiled. You cannot mix those two groups of kids. Homologation would mean the end of so many otherwise brilliant students. I can safely assert that we hear at Foothill are sheltered. Everyone here, CP or AP, has, however small, a desire to succeed and move onto college and the greater parts of life. At Ventura and Buena I cannot say the same.

Mr. Geib told us not to look down our noses at the college prep kids but did the college prep teachers instruct their students not to look on with contempt at the AP kids? Just as badly as I think most of us do not want to be subjected to forced classroom sharing with "them" I think that "them" thinks the same regard of us. Neither of us two parties wants to learn together. We are prohibited from advancement, and they are left gasping for breath as they struggle to maintain our accelerated pace. For those who do not wish to be in school then let them drop out! Why waste so much resources forcing trigonometry down their throats when they won't use ever again? For those who are uninterested in academics then put them in something that will help them. Trade school, the military anything but wasting tax dollars on stubborn mules. They are no less important than the over achievers as well. Just as our nation needs strong leaders our country demands competent workers. we are on a world stage now. If we revert back to classroom communism sure we might have one less thing to complain about but we'll be swept off our feet by international competitors.

Luke Ballmer | [April 10, 2012 11:19 PM](#)

Getting rid of all AP classes is a horrible idea, and I doubt that anyone supports it. If you do, read what Chris wrote and then get back to this blog (if you happen to be reading it).

Alright, so anyway.

Geib, you do an excellent job at throwing a lot of questions up in the air, and hoping we find something to challenge. This blog assignment is a prime example of that, but I don't much feel like scrambling around looking for questions to respond to. This issue, to me, comes down to one simple conflict: People find it hard accepting that some people are just plain more intelligent than others. Not better. Not superior. Just more intelligent. I don't consider myself in this group, and I don't dislike those who aren't as intelligent as my fellow AP kids. Intelligence, in large part, is working hard. So when Geib says the smartest kid may not be in AP, I'm skeptical. If a student was smarter than Jongseung, for example, they'd realize how much more successful they'd be in life if they applied themselves.

I'm not sure what the national trend toward "academic equality" is, but I'm sure it's not a powerful one. You take away our AP classes, and you take away any hope we have at a UC (well, for me, at least). Our education system sucks. Totally. Getting rid of AP classes in the name of equality is like cutting off our arm because we got a papercut. The way to fix a broken system is to first understand it, then to master it, then to rebuild it.

AP classes are for those who want to challenge themselves and are more motivated, to varying degrees. College Prep courses do not inherently exclude those things. College Prep math courses challenge me all the time. Each student is different. Some are better

equipped, mentally, hereditarily, motivationally, or what-have-you, to master "the system". Some aren't equipped at all. Let each student follow their own path. Don't cover up all possible roads. Enough of us follow the road less travelled to make its existence justifiable.

[Cara Crosland](#) | [April 11, 2012 3:05 PM](#)

When I first thought about idea of abolishing AP classes I thought that it would be a BAD idea, because then I would have no way to push myself in order to stand out from the larger bunch of people, by taking AP classes. My first thoughts were "what would the colleges that I apply to think if I don't take the hardest courses." However, then I thought about this topic a little bit longer and we discussed it a little bit more in class and I realize that AP is not a good thing. This has nothing to do with the class itself but the ridiculous drama, arrogance, hierarchy, and generalizations that come with being in AP. I'm not saying that every AP student is arrogant and dramatic but you can't seriously tell me things such as "CP students are slower", "they will copy our papers", "they are gonna cheat off our tests", "but what about MY GPA and MY drive for learning", and not sound arrogant or dramatic. Not only does AP create this snooty hierarchy in the high school system but it also creates a number of unrealistic generalizations both about AP and CP students.

When I walk in to my physiology classroom and I start my study guide there are sections that just don't make sense to me. When I don't know how to answer a question I go to one of my peers who does understand the subject. I'm not going up to them to copy their answer I am going to them so that I can understand the material because Mrs. Anderson is most likely busy and answering 5 other questions from other people. How could someone like me, who doesn't understand a section, get clarity if they don't have very many peers who are "experts" in the material? What should they do just form a huge line at the teacher's desk? I know that this year in AP we have all helped others in our class to get through AMEX with things such as study sessions and homework groups. We lean on each other and we learn from each other. So why would it be so terrible to add those student in CP to our study sessions and homework groups? It wouldn't. I have also heard some AP students say that this wouldn't work because "they wouldn't learn they would just copy our papers." Let's say this is true, number one there is more cheating and copying in AP then in CP which was a topic that showed up a lot in our cheating unit so the statement "they would just copy our papers" isn't even credible. Number two if you are so worried about someone in CP copying your paper why can't you just get the backbone to say "no you can't copy my homework." However, nearly all this is going off the generalization that all or most or a lot of the CP students are stupid, but CP students are not stupid not even close.

I am in CP math, so by this generalization that would mean that I am stupid at math. I am not stupid when it comes to math I just didn't want the stress and fast pace of an honors trig class, but this certainly does not make me stupid. I keep and A in my CP math class which means if you're talking strictly grade wise I am at the exact same level as every person who gets a B in honors math. So maybe you might think that this doesn't count because I am still in AP so this is just an exception. On the other hand I have several friends who are in all CP classes and they are by no means stupid in fact I would argue that some of them are smarter than many of us that are in AMEX.

The generalization that CP students don't care and don't want to try in school is the point that is the most annoying to me personally because that is not even close to true. Yes there are students who just don't care at all but there isn't this enormous amount of CP students that just don't care. AP students can't even complain that CP students don't pay attention because I have seen people asleep, doodling, texting, or just not paying attention in our actual AP history class. When I sit back and listen to the discussions that we have in class regarding this topic I am amazed at the ridiculous arrogance coming from this class. Just because you are in a class that moves at a faster pace than CP doesn't make you smarter and it doesn't make you God.

Why is it that just because we are in AP and might understand something quicker than others we get to be king of the school and we must be praised by the CP students because they are below us? It is terrible for us to act this way. Someone such as Albert Einstein had dyslexia so he understood things slower than most would. Maybe today because he didn't catch on to something with a snap of the finger he would be in CP classes, and he ended up being one of the greatest minds of all time. How do you know that the next Bill Gates is not in CP classes right now? So to my fellow AP peers I mean this in the nicest way possible, get off your high horse, you're not king, and you're not

superior just because you're in AP.

Anna-Marie Tan | [April 11, 2012 6:15 PM](#)

I took two previous attempts to write this, my first attempt was way too nice as I tried not to generalize, and my second attempt wasn't much better. So here is what I came up with, however I am still formulating an opinion in anticipation of our socratic.

Not all CP students don't care about school or are disruptive, not even the majority. But all it takes is a few people to ruin the class. Thinking back to my freshman biology class, I remember the group of about five students who were disruptive, and they made that class hell. It seemed that Miss Perez spent more time yelling at the class than teaching. As I moved on to more honors and AP classes that doesn't happen anymore. I don't dread going to my science class anymore, and it doesn't really matter who I sit next too, I don't have to worry about being able to hear over them talking. My experiences in AP classes have been better than in CP classes. Combining AP and CP students for all classes would not work to involve all students. The quiet students would blend into the background while the students with more vocal personalities would be the only regular contributors. And getting rid of AP or CP classes would be unfair for all the students. CP students could have chosen to take the AP route, but for some reason they didn't. Maybe they don't have supportive parents, maybe they want to focus on something nonacademic and don't want the added stress, whatever the reason they aren't in AP. And all of us posting this blog have chosen to take the AP route, most of us want the GPA boast, some of us want to go a competitive college, and a few people just want to see if they can do it.

I asked my mom what her opinion on AP versus CP classes and what she would do if FTHS stopped offering them. Surprisingly she said that she would be okay with that. When she was in high school students would take two or three AP classes in the whole four years of high school; the point was to show colleges that you would be able to manage the work a college class required. Since then education has become much more competitive as more students are going to college. Now the point is to take the hardest classes possible, while also playing a sport, holding a job, participating in volunteer work, and playing an instrument in order to show college admissions officers that you are the best possible addition to their school. When I graduate I will have taken six AP classes, and five honors classes while also being involved in a host of extracurriculars. I have definitely taken advantage of the many opportunities I have had, but this is one thing that has created the culture of AP. With students taking classes that are mostly AP, this leaves CP classes devoid of high achieving, extremely motivated students. It causes the separation that has led to the arrogance of some AP students, and the culture of "Us" and "Them." Basically the whole system is flawed and should be evaluated and reworked. But when will it get bad enough that someone will want to change it? And who will be struck by the unfairness enough to do that? The happy former AP student remembering their high school experience of competitiveness and how they were then able to achieve their goal of continuing on to a high ranking four year university/med school/law school/whatever else they wanted? Or the former CP student who still has the memory of being rejected from their dream college because they "didn't take any AP classes"?

Caitlin "the TA" Trude | [April 11, 2012 6:32 PM](#)

Didn't think I'd be writing again anytime soon - fear not, I shall maintain brevity. Before anyone goes all "Integration? I am appalled at the thought of breathing in the same air as a *gasp* College Prep student", know that I have finished going over 90+ DBQ's...and most of them were good. And know that a few were not quite up to par. Being enrolled in AP doesn't necessarily/automatically make one an AP-level student...food for thought. *This has been a friendly message from your resident senior sitting on the couch.

Elias Ontiveros | [April 11, 2012 6:59 PM](#)

The AP student looks down at the College Prep student and what does he see? Sloth. The CP student looks back and what does he see? Pride. The prestigious student scoffs at the underclassman and says "You could have chosen the path of righteousness but, instead, you decided to take the easy way out." Did the CP student really choose the alternate path because of his incompetence? Or did he opt out for a justified reason? Placing all of the students in the same courses indiscriminately will not solve anything. Merely putting everyone together will not create prosperity nor equality, if anything it would create discord and chaos. In order to be successful, the education system shouldn't allow these two academic classes to further away from each other by advocating one more than

another, instead, the system and the mindset of the people should be shaped to accommodate the student no matter their academic capabilities.

The presidential race has been going on for some time now and many people aren't entirely politically-savvy to understand what's going on, including myself. If I simply watch the news or read the newspaper, I'm completely clueless; all of these phrases, numbers, and names mean nothing to me because I can't make sense of them. However, when I watch the Colbert Report, I am finally able to digest this thick oatmeal that is the campaign for the presidency because Colbert explains it in such a way that I am capable of understanding. Such is the same for school, having a competent teacher is one of the most important things in order for a student to pass the class. Not only does the mentor have to be knowledgeable about their subjects, but should also appeal to their students. Unruly behavior in many classrooms (primarily during the placement of a substitute) is partially caused by the teacher's lack of charisma. Students learn best and give their full attention when they have an instructor whom they respect and admire. In the many years that I have had Honors classes, all of my teachers have been pretty good and, thus, I have been able to learn a lot in their classes. Inversely, I have had difficulty paying attention in classes because I had an instructor who I wasn't able to connect with. However, there is a limit to where an instructor can appeal towards their students until they forfeit their authority. One year, I had a teacher who everyone liked, but because he was so friendly with the students, the class walked all over him and we rarely got anything done. In order for a school to get the most out of its students, it is crucial to have friendly, educated instructors.

Much to our childhood chagrin, we can't be the best at everything. When explaining your class schedule to the one-track-minds of your relatives, they may ask in a unintentionally belittling manner, "Why didn't you take the AP course?" You may feel ashamed that you didn't take the mentally abrasive path of countless sleepless nights, even though taking a slower course was totally right for you. This year I signed up for regular Psychology and many people kept badgering me why I didn't bite the bullet and put the big boy pants on for the AP version. The answer is simple, I didn't know anything about Psychology and thought I should take it easy because I would have a lot on my plate. As for regular Physics, the class is already challenging enough as it is, so why should I feel obligated to put myself through hell just for the prestige? I respect those that loaded up their schedules with all the rigorous courses that they could possibly take, but I'm just taking things at my own pace. I would like to have to do the least amount of work possible but I know better than to not reach my potential but I also know my limits as to how much work I can handle. My thoughts about the situation can't be said about everyone who decides to take the bunny slopes, but my statement holds true for those who try their best without setting themselves up for a mental breakdown. It may be easy for some who are able to take a multitude of strenuous courses, but for others, it's just a matter of choosing your strong suits.

Mixing students of all demographics into a collectivized room would be one of the worst things for one's potential. It's one thing to make sure the same opportunity is provided for everyone but it's another thing to hold back one's capabilities for the sake of staying within the group. In one of my school years, I had a class which had a subject I absolutely love so I put so much devotion into my works. I would stay in for countless hours perfecting my art but when I saw my masterpiece being shown at the same level as a couple of simpletons, I felt indifferent towards much of my class. There were indeed a few groups who would create phenomenal works of art but the majority of the class was comprised of people who saw it as nothing more than a simple weekend project. I entered that class expecting to leave with new insight but I left the class feeling as if my capabilities were hardly even tested. Advanced courses are created to give those who want to exercise their potential and taking that opportunity away from them would limit their individualism by having them conform to the pace of the masses.

Approaching complete equality requires sacrifice, and the last time I checked, we're still capitalist so the whole "communist" thing is a no-go. A much more reasonable course of action would be for schools to provide better teachers for a better learning environment. Masochist students and condescending family members alike shouldn't expect others to sell their sanity for the attempt at a good grade. But in the end, it is all up to the priorities of the student, whether they choose to baby out and take the easy way or choose to take the road less traveled and take hold of their potential, for who knows what they could accomplish.

Steven Lee | [April 11, 2012 7:47 PM](#)

Personally, I believe that academic equality is a joke and that school districts should not even attempt to try and achieve that. There will always be students who are more intelligent than others. Those students are able to think at a higher level and need more difficult assignments in order to challenge themselves. Students who are put in a challenging environment can learn better work ethics, get a better education, and are pushed to strive for a good grade. Unlike regular classes, AP classes have a much different environment. Most students are trying to strive for an "A" and will not settle for just a "B". They are constantly pushing themselves to be the best student they can and earn the highest possible grade.

When I look at my AP classes, I see about a hundred students who are all trying to get into a superb college and get a stable career. They all know that in order to get to that stable career, they need to do well in school. With the challenges that AP and honors classes throw at us, we are put in a position where stress overwhelms us and where we have probably consumed too much coffee. Now, compare these students to regular students who seem to not care as much and not work as hard. There's a pretty big gap between the AP classes and the college prep classes. One of my friends was complaining about his college prep history homework and it was all busy work such as creating a comic, coloring and labeling a map, and writing a poem about anything. This is all busy work. You can't learn about all the specific details in history that AP classes teach by doing arts and crafts like that. Our work is tedious and takes time, but we actually go in depth with the material we learn. If anyone asks, just show them the AP tests we are given after every section. A student needs to understand all the specifics, reasons, and details why something was done in that time period.

When I compare AP and college prep classes, I like to use the analogy of the Earth. I see the college prep students in a space shuttle looking at the surface of the Earth from above. They see the clouds and some giant land masses and a giant ocean. AP students are the people who go through the atmosphere of the Earth and are able to see everything much more clearly. Not only do they see everything the college prep students are seeing, but they also see buildings, cars, and animals. They are able to view things more closely and understand the material much better than regular students.

"Is Advanced Placement 'Elitist'?" Well of course it is. It's where the students who love to take on a challenge go to. The system seems pretty fair to me and I don't see a point in trying to make AP and CP equal. It's the student's choice to pick which classes they want to choose not the schools. And if someone is rejected by AP because their grades are not good enough, maybe it should have been that person's responsibility to get the grade needed to be accepted. Abolishing AP classes is basically getting rid of classes that were meant for students who are capable of putting the time and effort to learn more. Now of course just because someone is in AP doesn't make them an AP level student, and someone who is in CP isn't necessarily dumb. Some students just like to be challenged more and move at a quicker pace without the distractions. Personally I enjoy AP classes because it looks like people actually want to learn the material. It's pretty hard to pass an AP class without trying and acting. Students actually have to work for their grade and be willing to make some sacrifices. My point is, those who want to learn more and be more advanced than others should have the resources to get that education. There's a reason why we choose AP instead of CP and it's not always because of the transcript for college...there's a lot more to it.

Katie Elvin | [April 11, 2012 8:08 PM](#)

I am struggling as how to start this blog posting. I think I'll blame my current brawl with words on the disconnect between what is and what "should" be and my utter appall at some of the responses to this question I have heard and read. If this were a perfect, or even fair, world then everyone would have a free and equal education. That's obviously not true. The money to pay for college is almost more of a worry than the ability to get into a college at this point. But, I digress. What I mean to say is go ahead, remove the AP and honors classes. This change would, in fact, change just about nothing. At least, not in the way the prompt leads one to believe.

You can get the same education out of a college prep class as an AP class. You can get as little or as much from a class as you like. I mean, AP reads the same books as college prep. CP learn the same things AP does. We just go over it more in depth and with a lot more timed essays. If a student wanted, they could easily go into a subject in such depth as the AP classes and, really, who's ever going to need to write an essay on an entire historical era in 45 minutes or less again? Which, now that I think of it, is a lot like how

Mrs. Kindred told us to get a free college education. Look up the books a professor gives out and read them and write the essays and follow the curriculum. I guess what I'm struggling to articulate is that getting rid of AP or honors classes is not hindering anyone's freedom in the slightest. And it most definitely does not mean that college prep kids will somehow "pollute" the class and make everything ever awful and the class unbearable, nor does it mean that AP kids wouldn't make it intolerable.

Contrary to the prompt, what is actually hindering the freedom of students is the fact that everyone who wants to take AP classes can't. Well, I guess in a way that is proving the prompt right. Not everyone can take AP classes now. Without AP classes the only thing that would change is the number of people unable to take them. But, freedom is already restricted with requirements. You had to have an A in English and history last year if you didn't take honors, and an A or a B if you did. But, at the start of high school you had to take a test to be allowed into an honors English class. And you had to take chemistry before taking honors physiology. My point is that it's elitist and creates inequality and hinders freedom to the umpteenth degree. Which can be seen in these blogs and responses in class. It was startling to hear actually. You should still be able to get a C if you want. And even if you do, you should be able to get the best possible education you can. Getting a higher grade by no means means that someone is better than someone who got a lower grade. And taking CP classes does not make someone inferior, stupid, unmotivated, lazy, a cheater, a druggie, or any of the other adjectives being strewn about. And taking AP does not mean someone is better, more intelligent, more motivated, or anything. It doesn't even mean that that person is working harder than someone in a college prep class. But, these labels have become outrageous, and, frankly, are downright elitist arrogance.

The riddance of such "advanced" classes would actually create more freedom for students, not minimize it. If the students described in the prompt really are that much more focused and motivated then they would research on their own and they would probably get more out of each assignment than the other students. And, they'd be able to research what they find more interesting, rather than spend countless hours on something they hate. Or not. Which is fine. But, they should have that choice while still being able to get the best possible education. Which, not everyone does now. Not to mention the fact that there would be opportunities and more freedom for more different classes for all students, rather than variations of the same thing.

Now, think of this: AP is a relatively recent invention. Were schools bad before there was AP? Were people's freedoms hindered? Were people not allowed to excel if they wanted to? Was it any where near the atrocious, unequal mess putting everyone in the same classes that it seems to imagined as?

Karisma Patel | [April 11, 2012 8:15 PM](#)

Placing all students through the same academic rigor is merely impossible. However, sharing similar knowledge to one another is practical. In order to differentiate the more advanced students from the ordinary students, schools must have AP, honors and college prep classes. Otherwise, students who work their way up to higher standards of knowledge will gain no further education in regular educated classes, therefore sacrificing their potential of excelling in academics, while also developing a world with even further competition for acceptance in colleges. These more advanced students would share their knowledge with those who do not learn as quickly, while the less advanced students would also struggle far more than those who are "suited" or "trained"(used to the workload) for AP or honors standards (in fact widening the achievement gap between the more academically advanced and less advanced students).

School is for learning, excelling and acquiring the necessary skills to do well in one's future endeavors and to help with this, academic skill levels need to be established. It would seem that refraining from separating students based on their academic ability is a form of equality, (especially in our democratically based American society), but every person is different. Each differs in levels of learning, acquiring, acknowledging, organizing and maintaining workload given. If the more advanced and less advanced educated students were combined into the same level of academics, there would be far more competition than ever before since each student would be learning the same exact thing at the same exact level. The academically stronger students would have an advantage due to their solid academic level, while also being held back of acquiring further education, while the academically weaker students would struggle keeping up and competing against the stronger students.

Though the academically stronger students will always hold an advantage over the academically weaker students due to their academic strength (GPA, focus, motivation, comprehensive level), some of the academically weaker students also work their way up with lots of hard effort to try and reach the higher levels. Sure college prep has some slackers, but don't most classes (even AP and Honors) have at least some slackers? Due to the idea that "students slack off because college prep is such an EASY class," most people (AP and honors students) naturally assume that the "dumber" students are in college prep. However, what they do not realize is that college prep students work as hard as any other student would. College prep students care about their grades, study and improve just like the so-called "prideful" AP and honors students. Sure some can't reach the excelling level that AP and honors students advance in, but they still have academic goals, motivation and high expectations for themselves. Not all college prep students are the standardized "slackers" "everyone" thinks they are. During my freshman year at Foothill, I decided to start with college prep English (with Mr.Geib!). From that class on, I worked my way up to AP and honors classes, clearly benefiting from the diverse leveled classes offered.

Variety of leveled classes is needed for students to start and finish strong. Learning and improving in every student differs at various levels, some academically weaker than others, some seeing the weaker students as "slackers", while others viewing the AP/honors students as "ignorant" and "prideful". However, eliminating AP and honors classes will only hurt all levels of academic students further as well as developing a communist environment in American education.

Madeline Keyes-Levine. | [April 11, 2012 8:40 PM](#)

To be very plain and simple the classes should not be integrated. Advanced Placement and college prep are both choices, despite the role environment plays on those choices. Both AP and college prep students choose to take that class for their own personal reasons and ignoring those and forcing them to do something else is not helpful. An AP kid might have chosen AP due an extreme interest in history (hopefully) or to merely impress their parents and taking AP away is not going to help them. The history buff is going to be sad and the overbearing father is going to be angry. Conversely college prep kids may have chosen college prep because they would rather focus on art or they simply 'hate school' and making them take AP is not going to help them. The art kid will continue to paint people instead of writing essay, while earning a subpar grade and the slacking school hater is certainly not going to stop slacking and start learning. In fact, it would have the opposite effect; if a student does not want to learn AP level history he's not going to. If you put me in trigonometry right now, I would probably just give up. I don't want to be there, I am in Algebra II for a reason and putting next to math intelligent students is not going to help me, it will only make me a sad confused person with a horrible trigonometry grade. Essentially integration will help next to no one.

With that being said AP kids can be real meanies. Too many of them think that they are the greatest thing since sliced bread and I can assure you they are not. Sliced bread is really awesome. This whole "us" vs. "them" attitude is just ridiculous. The number of core classes I have that are AP and college prep are exactly equal so technically I am just as much an AP kid as I am not. In fact a majority of the students in my college prep classes are sophomores, oh gosh! The definition of horrible if you ask the average pretentious AP kid who will continue to make "sophomores are awful jokes" no matter how unfunny they are. A sophomore AND in college prep! The horror! How do I learn anything over there constant yelling? How do I get past the incessant bullying? How have I not succumbed to there frequent pressure to do meth? In all actuality both of these sophomore classes are frequently less disruptive than Mrs. Kindred's second period full of people who claim that in college prep more time is spent disciplining than learning.

Not only are they quieter, they're nicer and certainly more humble. I'm not sure where the idea that the more AP classes you have, the nicer you are came from because while I'm sure someone in a college prep class has made snide comment about me somewhere along the line, never has anyone other than an AP kid been mean to me in a way so full of calculated cruelty. I'm not trying to have some pity party for myself, but the list of mean things AP kids have said to me greatly outnumbered that of college prep. And while college prep classes may be more disruptive and less ambitious, they also rarely reach Lord Chesterfield levels of condescension and arrogance and that has to count for something.

I would also just like to say that I don't hate all AP kids even if it seems that way.

Annabelle Warren | [April 11, 2012 8:45 PM](#)

So what exactly is the proposition here? Are we planning to bring everyone down to College Prep level, or are we raising the bar to AP for all students? Either way, both options are completely moronic and impossible.

Sure, I consider myself an "AP Student", but I've taken College Prep classes. Biology, Chemistry, Trigonometry, Art...and hell if I ever decide to take an AP Spanish class. Does this make me lazy? Does this make me one of those "slackers" that everyone was so vocal about? This is my first year taking a math class that isn't an honors course, and I'll tell you right now that I'm struggling to maintain a B. I do my work; I even pay a tutor to help me. If I were forced into Honors Pre-Calc ALONG WITH all my other AP classes, my head would spin. More than likely, I would just give up on school altogether because there is no way that I would survive the year. Now imagine how the kids who have only been in CP classes all their lives would feel if they were suddenly thrown into that lion's pit. I'm sure I wouldn't be the only one mentally checking out of school.

But what if all of us AP kids were demoted to college prep? First of all, this wouldn't work, even in theory. No matter what, you're going to have your slackers and your achievers, your passive and aggressive. The teacher can assign the easiest essay prompt known to high school; you're still gonna have the kids who turn in 4 pages typed and double-spaced, versus the kids who failed to open their planner.

Now let's just say that through faith, trust, and a little pixie dust, this theory is magically set in motion. Shall we consider the following: Otto, Hayley, Stephen, Emily Park, Luke, Marnie, Joe, etc...need I go on? Every year, Foothill's graduating class is endowed, nay, blessed with a number of geniuses. These are the young future lawyers, scientists, and politicians; people who strive for success by grasping opportunity. When they are locked in a classroom where dreams are stunted and opportunity is minimal, progress is impossible.

And besides, what has history taught us about communism?

Alyssa Chayasing | [April 11, 2012 9:01 PM](#)

So you say we should have one big fat class just so all students will be academically equal. You know, because equality is American and all. So I guess you're also implying that we should only have one meal in the cafeteria; perhaps celery sticks and brown rice; it wouldn't be fair to the wrestler or cheerleader if we served anything over 40 calories, or to the Asian kid if we served tacos instead of rice, or to the vegetarian if we served sloppy joes (and if you eat off campus every day, pretend you only have oatmeal at home because your mom is trying out a new diet). Why don't we make selection simpler by having no selection at all, so that everything is equal and (almost) fair for all? It's a wonderful idea because we're extending equality! No one will need to hoard pudding cups in their backpacks because we'll all be happy with our celery sticks! Mhm. Just like everyone at school will be happy and content in one big fat college prep class all reading little red books together. Oh joy.

On the other hand, isn't diversity just as American as America itself? I mean, our country is culturally mixed, we have countless choices on clothes and fashion, we have the freedom to eat whatever we want, and quite frankly we have and should still have the liberty to take whatever academic courses we'd like. Honestly, we are not all equal, and I mean equal mentally, emotionally, and physically, and everything in between. I'm not as athletic as Holly, not as smart as Jongseung, not as kind as Linda, and just not the same person as anyone but myself. If no one is as equal of a character as someone else, how could you expect any person to function equally in a class designed specifically to be equal?? AP classes shouldn't be abolished and class choices should not be minimized. If you ask me, I would rather have more classes to choose from; anything from CP astronomy to AP underwater basket weaving. Reducing classes for equality wouldn't be doing anyone justice for anyone. No one likes high expectations or limits, especially at the same time.

Molly Roberts | [April 11, 2012 9:05 PM](#)

Yes, there should be more equality in our educational system. Nobody can deny that. But really, AP and CP classes are part of an equal education. "Equality" is less forcing

everybody into the same boat, and more giving everybody the same OPPORTUNITY to succeed. Literally everybody is given the chance to participate in AP. All you have to do is get a B or better in your honors class the previous year, or an A in your college prep class. And even if you don't do that, you can write a personal appeal, and still PROBABLY get into AmEx! And then once you're there, if you find out that the subject really isn't for you, and you need to move at a slower pace to understand the material better, you can transfer out. There are more problems with academic equality in this country than AP, honors, and college prep classes, and those problems should definitely be addressed before anybody focuses on tracking.

As well as that, I know I would be quite upset if AP classes were eliminated. I want to be able to learn as much as I can about the things I am interested in, and AP helps me achieve that goal. But it definitely wouldn't be the worst thing in the world if some people got off their purebred high horses and realized that they aren't intrinsically better than the students taking college prep classes.

The problem is that so many of us have been in public school for all our lives, and have therefore been entrenched in the "Gifted and Talented Education" program since we were, what, eight? Which is great and all, good for us, but the problem is that ever since we could understand the concept of competition and superiority, respected authority figures (ie teachers and parents) have rammed the idea that we are better and smarter than all the other students around us down our throats. The effect of which has served to make us, as has been evident from the times we've discussed this in class, a large group of condescending, arrogant, jerks.

I currently take non-honors Chemistry, with a bunch of sophomores, and non-honors Algebra 2, again with a bunch of sophomores, which means that half my core classes are not only non-AP/honors, but not even standard JUNIOR classes, which means I am as much, if not more, of a college prep student as I am an "AP kid." So yes, I do take it sort of personally when all of you guys talk about how everybody in college prep is so super mean and drug-addicted and going nowhere in life. And look, I do know that I bring the class down, and I am just super sorry about that, that my "darkness" is snuffing out the brilliance of your "light." I guess I'm selfish like that, but what can you do? There ain't no reforming some dumbass drug-addicted college prep kid like me.

(Actually, there are three people in my recent memory who have gotten expelled from Foothill for drug related shenanigans. Two were for Adderall, one was for cocaine, one was a junior, two were seniors, and all either were taking, or had taken AmEx. Huh.)

Oh, and I have never been made fun of for being in advanced classes. I actually doubt any of you have either, at least not in any real way. And even if you have, then congratulations, now you have something to whine about, while still retaining the smug satisfaction that you have better priorities than your detractor! The best kind of problem! I will admit that I have been casually mocked for constantly reading. But people teasing me for pursuing an intellectual pastime never truly hurt my feelings. Nobody here feels shitty for being smarter/more motivated than average.

So in short, no, we shouldn't abolish AP classes, but we SHOULD all take a step back and realize that just because we happen to be taking a more fast-paced humanities course doesn't mean we are better people than those students with different priorities and skill sets.

Emilia Covault | [April 11, 2012 9:11 PM](#)

I am not in this class anymore. Not because I don't care. Not because I'm a druggie. Not because I'm stupid. Because I'm depressed.

Before I explain the opinion of an AP student gone CP student, let me explain my situation that led me to the change in classes.

I have always yearned to be academically challenged; at the elementary and secondary level. I took every difficult honors class I could manage because I love to learn. This year, I very much looked forward to being part of AmEx, until my mental health began slowly deteriorating. I was experiencing an adverse reaction to an antidepressant which reached its peak in mid-October when I nearly jumped out of a moving vehicle. The following month was filled with misery (and absence from school) and when I finally returned (still chronically depressed, but not suicidal) I felt that since a lot of my suicidal thoughts came from me feeling the pressure to be perfect, being in AP was no longer a wise option. So, I

dropped it, admittedly, with much sadness.

Now that you know the background, here's my honest opinion taking both sides into account. (Don't be personally offended.)

Not all college prep kids are stupid, just as not all AP kids are brilliant. The generalizations I've heard from my peers (mostly AP peers) are astoundingly assuming and rude. Most college prep kids actually care about their education, I think four out of thirty kids in my history class seriously don't try and even then, Ms. Adams makes them contribute something.

To address some of the previous comments on the matter of integration, I will rebut some people's radical statements. Alex Koch voiced, "The "students who disrupt class and care little" can easily be generalized to fit the reputation of college prep or regular high school class students, while the academic over-achievers are clearly the insane honors and AP students." Although eloquently articulated, this statement comes without fair consideration of the students in college prep high school classes. In my classes, people are relatively respectful because the teachers are very good, as are you respectful to teachers you think are good. Furthermore, if college prep students cared little for their classes, wouldn't they all be failing? You have to make a good amount of effort to get a C, especially if academics are not your strong point (as is the case for many college prep students). As for the AP students, they are, in fact, the over-achievers; you can't be a valedictorian unless you take those classes. But is it completely necessary or rational that we all be over-achievers? Steven Lee states in his blog posting, " Unlike regular classes, AP classes have a much different environment. Most students are trying to strive for an "A" and will not settle for just a "B". They are constantly pushing themselves to be the best student they can and earn the highest possible grade." That's true, but is it healthy that you won't settle for a B? B's are good, they're still above average, I think it would be more beneficial to settle for a B with less stress than to stretch for an A with unreasonably high stress.

It irritates me immensely when people use words such as "Druggie" "unmotivated" and "stupid" to describe college prep students when there are plenty of other reasons why they might be in college prep.

1. They may be aspiring to become something that doesn't require a college education such as a contractor, hairdresser, or store manager; all well-paying jobs.
2. Difficult classes may give them anxiety so, in the interest of maintaining sanity, they choose college prep.
3. They have extracurricular activities that are more important to them than school. To clarify, I do not mean playing video games, doing drugs, fighting or lighting things on fire.
4. Or, they have a serious, potentially life threatening illness or mental illness that prohibits such stress and pressure in their life.

There are many other reasons which I will not venture into for the interest of keeping your attention.

Furthermore, just because someone is in college prep classes does not mean they don't want to go to college and does not mean they won't get into college. I'm a college prep student and I want to go to college, I want an education and I will do whatever it takes to get it. Does that sound like someone who doesn't care about school to you? In addition, just because someone takes AP classes doesn't guarantee them a job in today's declining economy. Previously, it has been mentioned that the builders of our country and the leaders of the world would most likely be AP students, which is probably true, but have you considered that the people who fund, support and vote for these people are the general, college prep citizens? Next time you pull out the Lincoln, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Obama-AP card, consider who got them there.

Now, for the real question of equality versus excellence: many people have stated that integrating AP and college prep students is impossible and have implied that if it were to happen, communism would ensue and the world would subsequently end. To begin, it is not impossible as seen in the past when everyone would sit in one classroom and learn the same thing regardless of their "mental capabilities" and obviously, because we are here today, the Earth did not burst into a ball of flames because of it.

Regardless of all the points I've made thus far, I DO NOT think it would be a good idea to integrate college prep and AP students. Not because the college prep students would bring you down, or because you wouldn't be challenged; but, because of the way we view each other. With AP students looking down on us and calling us stupid and generalizing us

a "druggies," I don't think it would be a very comfortable environment for us to learn in and certainly not ego-building. And you certainly would not enjoy being in a room with people who call you "snobby elitist." But, there's a reason why we call each other these names. There's a reason why you generalize college prep students as "druggies"; because some of them are druggies. Just as some of us generalize you as "snobby elitists;" because some of you act like snobby elitists. We wouldn't have labels on us if we didn't act the way we do.

One of my friends once said, "AP students just don't hang out with non-AP students. It just doesn't happen." Since it was one of my friends, and I am a non-AP student, this is clearly a falsehood and it implies how AP students are assumed to be superior to all others; also a falsehood. As you continually pull out the basic rights in our nation: freedom, free will and opportunity, consider that Thomas Jefferson says "all men are created equal" regardless of race, gender, ethnicity and mental capability and in this case; desire to be challenged.

To me, equality means equal opportunities and equal rights. Excellence means doing your very best within your capacity which I think both AP and CP students alike, are doing. However, these two groups of students should not be placed together if they are going to continually act irrationally towards each other.

The closing statement to this blog:

I love learning. I love school. I get A's. I work hard for them. I have a relatively large vocabulary. I read a lot of Shakespeare. I'm strange. I'm chronically depressed. I still try my best. I succeed most of the time. I'm a college prep student.

*I'm sorry if this has come out as hateful to AP students, I sincerely did not intend it that way. I respect AP and non-AP students equally, but in different aspects.

*Thanks for letting me post here Mr. Geib!

Hayley Abourezk-Pinkstone | [April 11, 2012 9:17 PM](#)

Sorry, but I'm going to change the prompt, because clearly most of us think that integrating AP and CP is a bad idea. I agree! But nonetheless, here we go. I promise I'll revert to the actual prompt at the end.

Instead of suggesting the integration of AP and CP, let's pretend that Mr. Bova received a complaint about the differing levels of students within the AP class itself. Because of this, he and the school board have decided that, due to the excellence of many students at Foothill, we will extend the academic hierarchy and open up a NEW class called SUPER AP in which only 15 students are allowed. These of course will be only the tip top students and they will be selected by teachers and administrators, based on grades and previous academic success at Foothill. These classes, due to even more accelerated curriculum, will count as a 6.0 on the 4.0 scale and will look extremely impressive on college applications, so of course everyone wants to get in.

Now let's say you're a hard working American Experience student, but you've gotten a B or two here and there and you fall at about average in the AP class (which is still an accomplishment of course but that's not the point). When the acceptance list comes around for the all-new and exclusive SUPER AP class, you are upset but not entirely surprised to see that you're not on it. You will remain in the "regular" AP class.

The SUPER AP kids all of a sudden become a whole lot snobbier than they were in regular AP. They clearly have the academic alpha position at the school, and they show it. They become a tight group of friends in which no one else is allowed, and they have exclusive study parties, cram sessions and inside jokes. You, who used to be one of the smart kids, is now looked down upon as stupid and lazy because you didn't make it into SUPER AP. Your grades drop a little bit and your confidence takes a pretty hard hit when you realize that there's no need to try to excel any more, you will never be at the top of the food chain again.

Okay, back to reality. I am asking you, American Experience students, would creating a SUPER AP class be a good idea? Maybe only if you're one of the kids who would make it. We are SO INCREDIBLY biased on this topic because we are all on ONE side of the balance. And this includes American Experience kids who used to be in college prep because you guys are the exceptions!! You are the ones who should have been in AP all along! You're the superstars who were allowed to come here...you made it on the "list", when there were other people who didn't.

I'm not saying that I want to combine the College Prep and Advanced Placement classes

at Foothill. I just aim to point out the irony in asking only the implied "superior" group.

We ARE the SUPER AP class, to them.

I call it perspective.

Jocelyn Veyna | [April 11, 2012 9:17 PM](#)

This is my first year taking an AP level class. Last year I was in the typical CP class with Mrs. Wantz and I am proud to say that I was one of the top kids in that class. I understand what the AP kids mean when they say "CP kids just mess around and act like fools in class" because I remember those days when we would have a substitute and all of a sudden everyone started changing seats and sitting in a circle gossiping and talking about their drama. I used to be one of those kids. I would look at my twin sisters' homework load and laugh at her because she would be up until 1 in the morning finishing her history homework. I thought she was dumb and crazy for taking Honors classes, but now I realize that she was making the right decisions. We AP kids take hard courses because we are trying to prepare ourselves for what lies ahead in our future in college. College is not easy, so why not start preparing for it now.

What I enjoy most about AP compared to the CP classes is that the environment is clearly distinct. Everyone strives to learn more and when you step into class you know that you are bound to learn a whole new chapter of history. In CP classes, people walk into class and go straight to their friends and talk, completely ignoring the teacher. I know this because this is exactly what used to happen in class last year. When group projects were assigned, all the "dumb" people would make sure they had at least one smart person in their group because they knew that the smart person would do all the work. For example, when we had to do our Imperialism Essay in CP I of course was stuck in a group of people who immediately expected me to do all the work. On the other hand, when we do group projects in AP everyone does their part and it feels like there is so much incredible brain power going around that it's overwhelming.

Here is the main question, should we abolish the AP system? Personally I don't think we should. Coming from a student who used to be in CP classes I feel more like I challenge myself and give it my all in the AP classes. The work load is basically the same; however, AP kids are just expected to deal with the pressure of having to crank out 3 essays in 2 hours. I love how intense AP classes, it gives me a rush. I play sports, it takes up a lot of my time, I can easily give up and go into CP classes and my life would be that much easier. But I'm not a quitter, AP is hard, life itself is hard, and it always takes a little bit of courage to get through anything you do. This year I am taking 2 AP classes and an Honors class, and add MedTech to that. Yeah, talk about a work load, but it's not going to get easier later on in college, so why not start preparing for it now. I guess what I'm trying to say is that AP kids have it hard, but it's because they choose to have that lifestyle. They can quit, anyone can, but sticking with it until the end is a sense of joy that you can't replace. So no, AP kids aren't better than CP kids, but I do think that AP kids should get a certain amount of respect. We work hard, and play even harder. AP is a journey, and so is CP, but only one will survive.

Ahdam Ali | [April 11, 2012 9:48 PM](#)

Oh you say you're taking away AP classes next year? One side of me says "FINALLY" and the other side says "I'll go send my job application to McDonalds." There's obviously two sides to this, and those who are condescending dicks that associate drugs with College prep kids and think we should not be in the same room as them can go suck on themselves. If however Mr. Geib magically terminates AP classes at Foothill, I might be happy because I won't have a shitty year. But at the same time, I'll have a shitty time looking for colleges. We were told that maybe, if we mingled with the college prep kids, that our strive for knowledge would rub off on them. But if it rubs off... we'll lose some of it! Kind of like an ice cube in water. The water gets cold, but the ice cube heats up, as they reach an equilibrium in temperature. I know many kids in college prep classes that DO want to learn, but maybe their strong-suit or future career doesn't require in-depth history! In my mind, the "elitist" class in 11th grade is Honors Trigonometry and Calculus. There's only one period for it...how many are there for Amex? 3, per class of course. And then there are the kids who really DON'T want to learn. I think we should try and push them towards it a little, but sometimes the stubborn mule needs a kick right in the ass sending it out of school, and into a job of his or hers choice. Maybe community service, I don't care! Typically it's not my problem beyond the ass-kicking. Another idea is to get rid of all CP classes and make them all honors/AP classes. That way

our gene pool will slowly hone its way to perfection. It's like my take on J-walking. The stupid ones get killed and so their genes won't get passed on! In my past 2 years at Foothill, I've taken CP English and History. Though I had a stronger work ethic, I wasn't much different from them. I may have read a little better, but my writing was still shitty. Now that I am in the all amazing AP English class...guess what, my writing's still shit. Is it my fault, who knows? My point is, if you put a wolf in a herd of sheep, it's still a goddamn wolf!

Lauren Amendola | [April 11, 2012 9:56 PM](#)

It's close to impossible not to generalize on this blog, so if I do, know that I only mean some, if not a few people. Not all people.

Yes, we should keep the AP classes, I don't have a problem with that. What I do have a problem with is how some people choose to justify it. "They will copy us", "We will downgrade ourselves by working with them", "I will not get into college if I take CP courses." This is all BS and a lame excuse to why there should be both AP and CP classes. The whole reason that AP was created was to let kids who want to challenge themselves have a class to take. I was not made to keep away the "less intelligent" and before AP ever existed, everyone was taking CP together and it wasn't the end of the world. Even if it were created to separate the overachievers from the underachievers (which it's definitely not) CP, especially at Foothill, would not be considered an underachieving class. Most CP students and teachers work very hard to educate and learn the material given. CP may not be as intense as AP, but it's definitely not taking the easy way out. Going to Foothill alone is not taking the easy way out. The statement that "all CP students are slackers" is not true and I know because I was in CP freshman and sophomore year. Yes, there are always some who don't care about their school work and cheat, but some of those people are in AP. From what I have experienced, most CP students try their best and when your insulting them, you almost insulting me. I was a CP kid, I still kind of am.

AP kids will never fully have the credibility to downgrade CP students unless they were in CP themselves. Not just one CP level class, but years of it. I think a lot (not all) of AP kids have been in honors their entire lives and a lot of times they just don't fully understand it. I'm sure that I might have been thinking differently if I had never been in CP all those years.

In class today, Mrs. Kindred made a point that maybe we ought to get the CP kids involved in the debate because it would only be fair and I totally agree with her. How are we going to have this big Socratic about AP and CP students with only the AP students? It seems that it may turn out more one sided that way. I would be very interested to see what some of the current CP students would have to say. Even with everything said, I still think AP should remain a class because anyone should have the right to take a more challenging course.

I understand that life isn't fair and while people are more talented in History and English, others are more talented at math or art or even something like helping the community. Taking away AP would be more unfair than to keep it. I believe that everyone has a calling and that doesn't give anyone the right to brag or act supreme if their calling makes them appear more intelligent. I believe that there are so many different types of intelligence even if some are more praised than others. AP can be a great thing when used as a way to challenge students and give them opportunities to excel. Sadly, the unintended effects of AP like hierarchy and arrogance hold it back from its true potential of being the great American Experience that we all know and love.

Stephen Mariani | [April 11, 2012 10:10 PM](#)

Advanced Placement at Foothill: The breeding grounds for elitism and class dynamics among each grade? Perhaps, but allow me to propose a question that has yet to be asked. Are the students of these classes the only ones to blame for this hierarchical standing above the standard curriculum? Or do the actions of the staff around campus foster an even greater sense of entitlement and invincibility among the high rankings students?

Let me take you back. It was the year 2010, a fine year for Foothill. A year that would put a skip in Mr. Bova's step, with four valedictorians earning 5.0's and a high percentage of students going away to top universities. I was just a freshman at Foothill, I had not yet fallen victim to the pressures of competition among my classmates, I was merely breezing

through my classes without a care in the world. My brother, however, a senior, was on the opposite end of the high school spectrum. He had just days left until graduation and it was off to college for him, but before he walked off campus as an alum, he left Foothill with his parting words in an end of the year project. This project was for his last class of the day, Bioethics, taught by the one and only Mr. Geib, of course. It was a group project, and well if you Amexers believe Mr. Geib can be vague in his instructions this year, from what I've heard this project was even less than a blank canvas. Anyways, my brother was partnered up with two of Foothill's finest: a young woman, one of the four valedictorians, and a young man of the Bioscience academy, admitted to both Harvard and Stanford that year (a power squad to say the least). Mr. Geib said to run with the project and truly sum up their time at Foothill however they chose, and they took off sprinting. The movie they made was truly in need of a disclaimer: "viewer's discretion advised". They covered every social aspect of high school: sex, drugs, and rock n roll, and man did they go out with a bang. Next thing they knew, they were in the office with their parents being reprimanded for this harshly non-school appropriate portrayal of Foothill and its students. Perhaps reprimanded is too strong of a word though, a more accurate description would be a slap on the wrist or a stern finger shaking. The question arose: was Mr. Bova truly going to bar these top students from graduating and not be able to show off their prestige ceremoniously? Their lack of punishment seems all too coincidental. Don't get me wrong, I would be distraught if I hadn't seen my brother walk, but it begs the question of where our administrations priorities are.

These kids were AP students, perhaps some were in Hayley's "Super AP" category (see above posting), but where does our principal draw the line? This is not the only example, perhaps I am in the dark about the extent of various incidents that have occurred over the years, but it is my understanding that there is a correlation between those who receive harsher punishments and those who have fewer achievements. To me, that begs the question should we as students be scolded for looking down our noses, or do the actions of our staff and the way we are seen within the school arouse these accusations unjustly?

Either way, it is unfair to discriminate against the college prep students. "They can't hold a conversation." That's just disturbing to hear that come out of the mouth of an AP student. I do not believe that a higher level class is solely responsible for these opinions, however. Academic excellence via individual determination is a corner stone at Foothill, and many other high schools, perhaps the dynamic is just more apparent at a highly competitive school. In all seriousness, what is worse: a feud between an advanced placement class and a college prep class (to be noted is higher level than many other schools' regular classes) or an intra-school racial standoff?

Adam Braver | [April 11, 2012 11:03 PM](#)

To me, this blog has touched upon one of my most passionate beliefs, and in order for me to properly express it, I shall first start off by painting a scene of the wild, urban jungle in which many of us adolescents (and animals) call "home."

Imagine a vast, ever-expanding city in the heart of a prosperous yet struggling nation. It is a city, where skyscrapers are quite literally piercing the clouds that are mocking them, and where gravel is more commonly stepped on than any single patch of grass. Entrepreneurs are flourishing, but so are the homeless and the struggling. Indeed, it is a city of many contradictions, and one in which not just humans, but also dogs run amiss through the streets; and among these great canine fellows, there resides two groups: the young, lost puppies, and the powerful, knowledgeable dogs (yes, puppies and dogs are of the same race, but please look over that small factor for the point of this blog). The puppies, inexperienced, and often without a proper path to seek, instead walk in the shadows of the elite, top dogs; dogs, who seek to become the best of the best, who wish to rule above all others and desire to profoundly change the world in one way or another. The dogs, who are the leaders, and the puppies, who just happen to be the followers.

Perhaps this may sound cheesy, or canned, or whatever you want to say, but for the longest time, I used to identify myself among the lost puppies. I never wanted to lead people towards some greater goal or change; instead, I wanted to be constantly guided by the "top dogs" around me. I was seemingly unmotivated, and largely just wanted to laze about and ponder over ideas, yet I never actually wanted to implement them. All in all, I thought of myself as failure.

It used to be shameful for me to admit it as well (I am now indifferent to the matter, of course), but just last year, I was a college prep kid. I was taught at a lower level than all

of the honors students were taught at the time, and as my sophomore year began to pass by, I began to hate it. I had no vendetta against the college prep students or what they were learning; I simply felt like the chocolate-covered raisin among all of the regular raisins (I really hope that didn't sound offensive). I stuck out in my classes, and that was because I always wanted to learn more. That was what my sophomore year did to me: it gave me the motivation to want to discover more of the facts for myself, and it threw upon me this unforeseen feeling to want to be among the top dogs of the school. It was around that time period that I told myself I needed to ascend the ladder of my adolescent life and climb towards the higher step of enrolling in Advanced Placement classes the following year. Now, I can say for a fact that despite the elitism of it all, I certainly do not regret it.

Here was the thing though: I was never forced to enroll in the rigorous AP curriculum. I chose it for myself. It was my decision to make, and in my opinion, I made the right choice. But that was for me. I can say that, coming from a college prep environment, to force the iron hand upon the general college prep population to enroll in AP classes would be a disaster. In fact, it is absolutely preposterous! So many CP students, who were already unmotivated in their classes, would become even more unenthusiastic just from the thought of taking AP classes. You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink. Please do not force your will upon others. Not only is it undemocratic, but it is illogical. Let the individual decide, not the coerced collective. It is ultimately up to the lost puppy whether or not it wishes to mature into a proud, powerful dog (particularly, a top dog). Let it continue that way, for I can practically guarantee you that if it does, then the seemingly few ex-college prep students who decide to take the AP courses will ultimately have a beneficial role to play in the overall AP curriculum rather than a negative one.

Ricky De Anda | [April 11, 2012 11:14 PM](#)

We need people who can work the microwave at your local McDonalds and we need people who can perform open-heart surgery. Either creating a school system slugging at the pace of molasses for all or challenging all students with depth and a quick learning pace will not solve the theory of an undemocratic tracking school system. The journey of moving up and living the American dream cannot be accomplished if you are sitting next to average Alex and silly Sally. The same applies to the idea of everyone attending AP classes trying to become the next Bill Gates (to those with diligence and dedication). Having the choice of a rigorous class or a slower learning academic environment should not be considered "segregation", but more like "separating those who would work harder in a class and challenge themselves more than those in college preparation classes and having certain academic labels like "AP" and "CP". Wait a second that is segregation, oh well!

What harm have higher educational classes caused? A college bound life? An opportunity to do more with your knowledge? A more financially stable lifestyle? Last time I checked AP classes have provided benefits to those who endured its yearlong dedication. Equality can only be achieved if we all learn the same thing without a choice (not part of a democracy), earn the same amount, think the same, be the same, and become like that of Communist Russia, under the reign of Barak Obama in Communist America. A democracy provides opportunities, and the given opportunities do not have to be accepted by all, but by all who are willing to accept the challenges.

While the AP class is still provided, I am going to accept some to enhance my learning experience leading up to college. I have enjoyed what classes like AMEX and AP English have provided and taught me, especially that we are not to view "them" (college prep kids) as something less. But academic "segregation" happens no matter if you are in two different class levels or the same class, so removing AP or CP classes would just create a stew of "the smart ones" and "them" in equally paced classes.

Madeline Keyes-Levine | [April 12, 2012 6:57 AM](#)

This is really amazing Emilia! You're really amazing!

Desiree Sehati | [April 12, 2012 11:36 AM](#)

I don't think that AP and Honors classes should be removed from our schools. A lot of you seem to be saying that we should keep AP and Honors so that the "motivated" people are in one class with each other, and the "unmotivated" in another, but that's not my reasoning for this at all. It's just that every single person is at a different academic level in every subject imaginable. There are many people at this school that may be in an Honors

math class and College Prep English, AP English and a CP math class, or CP/AP in both. We all know our strengths, so that's the ultimate reason why we choose the classes we do.

This year when I talked to my counselor about my schedule, I had a major dilemma. For Junior year, I was trying to make the String Orchestra class at Ventura High fit into my Foothill schedule. This meant that I would have to be at Ventura in the morning and then rush over to Foothill to make it to third/fourth period on time. I was willing to deal with the strange schedule because I wanted to be part of the music program. However, the String Orchestra class at Ventura completely clashed with the Honors Trig/Pre-Calc class I'd signed up to take at Foothill. I had to make a decision for whether I wanted to do Honors math or music, because I couldn't do both. In the end I chose the trig class over music. Why? Math is my strongest subject, and I knew I wouldn't be challenged enough if I decided to take the CP Trig class. And you know what? I was right to make that call because I've been doing very well in the Honors Trig class this year. Even though I'm not enrolled in music, I can always do it next year, right? (That is, if the scheduling works out.)

I'm not going to deny that there isn't a difference in the types of people in CP and AP, because there are. And seriously, CP is not made up of people who aren't motivated! There are plenty of hard workers in those classes. And who's to say that there aren't slackers in AP? There are, but not as many in proportion to CP classes because our homework is an essential part in allowing us to succeed in class. The homework in College Prep is also essential, but I depend on my homework to give me a clearer understanding of what I'm learning in class – and I'm especially referring to History and Math right now. If all classes were combined at this school and AP was no longer an option, students all around wouldn't benefit from their classes to their fullest abilities. If all classes were AP-style, students that aren't at that level will struggle, and they might just shut down at one point and give up while those higher-level students get the benefit. If classes were all at the College Prep level, AP students wouldn't have any sort of challenge. We're each highlighted by our strengths, so why don't we have classes available that'll challenge our strengths more that they normally would? That's where Honors and AP enter the picture.

Desiree Sehati replied to [comment from Desiree Sehati](#) | [April 12, 2012 11:40 AM](#)

Sorry the spacing for my last three paragraphs got messed up so it looks like one big paragraph!

Otto Tielemans | [April 12, 2012 2:00 PM](#)

Unless you are in my zero period art class, you probably don't know that I have a brother seven years my elder. His name is Ronny; he was born in Honduras and was a student here at Foothill in the early chapter of the schools life.

He was never the type of person to get up early to go to school. He wouldn't devote ours to a project or time and thought into a simple homework assignment. No, he was the type of kid that was absorbed in sports, girls, and other male related interests (wink-wink). I remember as a child when I finished my homework that I would go read in the living only to retreat back into my room because Ronny had decided it to be appropriate to play rap music at full volume. I also remember hearing him run back and forth in the backyard playing soccer, while I TRIED to work on a science paper. I even remember him talking to his various girlfriends to the late hours of the night while I attempted to get some sleep.

But what I don't remember was Ronny doing any work.

Sure he came to school and was in the honors classes, but that doesn't mean that he did anything. As a matter of fact, the times I can recount Ronny doing so homework are so limited that I could count them on a three-fingered man's hand! So it should come to no surprise when I say that my beloved brother Ronny ended up transferring to Ventura high school after only a year or so of being at this great school.

My mother didn't find out (as like my case with leaving BioScience) that my brother had transferred schools until WAY AFTER he had done it. And by WAY AFTER I mean more than 8 months. You can only imagine my mother's frustration at this revelation. Yelling things such as "... IF ONLY WE WERE IN HONDURAS" and "WHEN I'M FINISHED WITH YOU..... YOU'RE... BODY... WON'T BE RECOGNIZABLE." However, my mother's furiousness went away after my brother uttered a simple phrase. All of the shouts and hostility in the air vanquished with the simple word "I'm doing better at Ventura."

Now it wasn't necessarily the change of schools or a change in work-ethic that made him

do better. It was actually the change expectations that made him flourish. He admitted that now that he was in college prep classes, all he had to do was bare minimum. He didn't have to think, he just had to do.

Its people like my brother who college prep classes benefit. The people who simply don't want to do anything have the luxury of being in an environment that doesn't demand much from their pupils. So why don't we, you may ask, just eradicate AP classes from the face of the earth?

Because for every ten people like my brother who don't want to do anything, there is at least one person who wants to be challenged. One person who doesn't care about having to lose sleep or precious time to socialize.

But there is the problem of arrogance from the AP kids, you may say! Well in all honesty, who cares? Don't we deserve it? When Mr. Geib asked me in class if I was arrogant because I was an AP kids I had no problem of responding with "Heck yeah!" because I feel that I deserve to be arrogant. I put in so much work that the least I can do is brag about it to those who do less than I! I know that it probably sounds rude, but if you reflect on the previous 72 hours of your life I'm sure that you committed the "AP sin" of bragging about your work load and the tremendous force that you expended to accomplish it all.

If AP classes were terminated here at Foothill, I would probably switch schools. No, I wouldn't go to Ventura, Buena, or Cabrillo. I would probably end up going to Villanova Preparatory School in Ojai; the school which I was originally going to attend in the 9th grade. In fact, the only reason for why I didn't go there was because my parents got divorced and legal fees ate up my tuition!

BUT, regardless that I didn't attend Villanova I'm happy that I came to Foothill because I love the atmosphere of competition and the zeal to exceed in life that so often lingers in the air. If accelerated courses were ended, the zeal would fly out the door and I would just be in a school that is slowly becoming the type of classroom that my brother Ronny loved. A thing which would demotivate students while at the same time crushing previously industrious work-ethics.

Stephanie Partridge | [April 12, 2012 4:50 PM](#)

When Mr. Geib first brought this up in class I thought, "well, isn't it every man for himself?" Trying to write this blog now, I find myself to have a different view on it all. I was upset by this suggested way of organizing classes because merging AP and CP classes feels to me like all of my choices are being ripped out for some bizarre social experiment. If I've learned anything from my (college prep) psychology class it's that participants in an experiment must be volunteers and be consenting. If this was happening because that's just how things go and nothing could stop it, I would be all right with it. We have only college prep level biology and health/geography for freshmen. That's how it has been for a while, and sure that could be changed, but as a freshman, I saw that as just how things were, there was nothing to be done about it. However, the "experiment" part of this isn't what most bothers me. The worst part is the choices being taken from me. It's like you have something, and all of a sudden it's gone. The choice between two levels of a class is a choice that I get to make about my life. That is where I get the "every man for himself" thing. I've had higher level classes available to me for so long. That availability of them (not actually being in them) I have been seeing as a right and not a privilege, so imagining it being taken away suddenly does upset me.

After reasoning out where my displeasure of this proposal comes from, I realize that this would hold me back, but I wouldn't mind so much. In AP classes I can learn much more, but they are very serious and stressful. In CP classes I don't learn as much, but they are more fun and probably better for me health-wise.

I spent three or four quarters of my freshman college prep biology class sitting at the same table as the greatest clown/goof/whatever you want to call it of that class. Sure we have them in AP, but there's a lot more time to goof off and not be so serious in CP. Sometimes this could be a real annoyance and disturb my work, but other times the class was genuinely fun. AP can be fun, but that usually means I enjoy the challenges it gives me. So this kid, in addition to being quite silly, had trouble understanding the material we were learning. I often felt like most of the time given to work in interactive notebooks I spent teaching him. I suppose this is what Mr. Geib is looking for, except it's not just a rub off of work and understanding of material between students. The mix of AP and CP for that biology class had created a middle ground where the material was for some too

easy and unchallenging and for others very difficult. I really didn't mind too much. The class was easy and fun. Also, helping another student most likely helped me ensure that I understood the information. On the other hand, the class was also a big time waster for me. So I guess, if this were to actually happen for reasons other than an experiment, I would be okay with it, but still a little bothered because if I am going to waste my time I want it to be my decision.

Clare Riley | [April 12, 2012 4:58 PM](#)

In 6th grade, I was a victim of President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program. Along with the rest of Anacapa's 6th grade, I was forced to enroll in "Reading", an extra hour of English. The class consisted of reading one book and cutting out magazine picture for a giant collage. And so I refused to waste my time and ended the semester with an F. Let me assure you, as a GATE student I read the Egypt Game in an hour and was capable of doing the work, I simply felt it was beneath me. It reminds me of BioScience Survey with Mrs. Hunt, a study hall period in which we wrecked havoc upon Foothill. All I learned was that if the "smart" kids are bored then things go to hell in a hand basket. So no, I don't think combining AP and college prep would be the best idea, mainly because chaos and anarchy would rule. BUT I wouldn't break down and cry if AP classes were ended. The world does not revolve around you and your GPA. You won't die if your dreams are crushed by a college; VC is not hell on Earth. While I may not be a proponent of combined classes, I do think AP kids have their noses stuck so high in the air that they can't see reality. College prep kids are generally not dumb, pot smoking people with any ambition in life.

By now practically everyone has seen Emilia's blog and knows about her depression. She made my point, shit happens. What really is infuriating to me is how self righteous everyone gets about the Oxnard kids. "They have choices" "everyone is a gang member" My dad happens to teach at Pacifica, an Oxnard high school. Yes there are gang members; yes there are an extraordinary amount of dropouts; and yes they've got an incredibly low API score. (FUN FACT: Did you know that Special Ed kids are included in an API score? Foothill has a definite advantage) A good portion of students live in poverty or close to it. Some are their family's only source of income. Others are kicked out of their homes to live where ever they can. Don't diss and dismiss. And still Foothill's BioScience Academy was based off of Pacifica's Health Science Academy. Students still AP classes and for the most part, succeed. Some have gone on to Harvard.

This was not meant to be a rant, but oh well – that's life. All I want to reiterate is: Don't diss and dismiss

Alea Grundler | [April 12, 2012 5:03 PM](#)

I will follow suit of Hayley and tweak the prompt a bit to prove my point. We all know the saying, "Never look down on someone unless you are helping them up." How could we declare our worth to be more than another human being? What means of measurement do we use to assess this? Rather it be the school you go to, the family you are born in, the classes you choose to take, how well you do in those classes or anything at that superficial level, it is just ridiculous. Some people do possess that knack for history, or they just get numbers, or eloquent words just flow from them effortlessly. This doesn't make them better. It actually doesn't even mean they are smarter. Intelligence is much too complex to assess simply by grades. Some people have stronger work ethic. This, also, does not make them better. There are reasons for the lack of manifested ambition in people's lives we are likely unaware of. It isn't fair to say that it isn't there.

Oh, well, you know, they obviously just don't care because they are in college prep. That is ridiculous! People have different interests, goals, ambitions. And that in itself is a truly beautiful thing. We cannot care the same amount about the same things or we would all have the same job and marry the same person. I am not even sure how that works, but you know what I mean.

I am actually a huge proponent of a SUPER AP if that were an option for students. And no, I wouldn't be in it, nor would I want to. The regular advance placement class is just challenging enough for me. But maybe some people would like to be challenged more. There is nothing wrong with that.

And as to college prep kids, come on take this class if you want to. They could do it if they chose. Foothill's a lottery, a gang member can come here and learn if they want. But they don't. So why not exercise the free will that this country was founded on. If we yearn for prosperity, then we can reach for it, work for it, and attain it. Setting limits for those who have this desire so that those who don't may be inspired to have that as well is

just a horrible idea. It would most likely do the opposite. Because of judgment. It really wouldn't be a matter of "looking down just to help them up". The same people would look down on the same people. Only, they would share the space to make it closer to touch. And that judgment is the root of all these problems. The issue of this argument is really how to eradicate that. To that I am not quite sure yet. I guess you should just get over yourself, step off that high horse you've put yourself on and realize we are all just people in the end. That is all that really matters anyway.

Senin Ranasinghe | [April 12, 2012 5:23 PM](#)

What would happen if they took out AP classes in your school district? I would be personally devastated, rather than not thinking a second thought about it. Well, that's what I thought about this blog topic until today. After history class, I went to my FIRE class and asked Mr. Sanchez what he thought about it. From his perspective, he didn't want to start from scratch like you're a rookie teacher. Ironically, he didn't want to start fresh like last year. He did have a point. His point was that it's always a pleasure to have students that are on top of it, and also well behaved. It's always a challenge to have students that are just getting by, and also having side conversations for a portion of the class. What stuck with me is that I see that in my elective classes. I have three elective classes this year: AVID, Med.Tech, and Art 1. When I think about the classes, I see exactly what he was saying. I see the kids that have a drive for learning and try and depict the meaning behind Picasso's Mona Lisa for the challenge of it. I see the kids who just chit chat and fool around when the teacher turns their back on them.

Towards the end of my school day, I ask Mr. Crouch for his two cents. He said that he wouldn't mind having both types of students (CP and AP) in his class. However, the wording of my question was along the lines of; "would you enjoy having a Photo class with a mix of AP and CP students?" My opinion on this topic is that along the lines of teachers' experiences and what they have learned over their years of teaching. A veteran teacher versus a sophomore teacher. I instantly see that a veteran teacher could handle practically any problem presented by a student. For a newer teacher, I can see that they might struggle with possible problems presented by a student. Thinking beyond this battle of experience, I know we all have something in common. We're all human. We all have our flaws, our strengths and all the other small important details that make us who we are. I don't understand why AP students look down at CP students. We were all CP students at some point in our academic career so far. I also don't understand why CP students look up at AP students with contempt. Don't be jealous with our drive for learning. You could also be trying your very best in your CP class. I think I've put my two cents into this blog.

Marnie Vaughan | [April 12, 2012 6:08 PM](#)

Under no circumstances should all AP classes be eliminated from foothill. Does something need to be done regarding the equality and treatment of students at different academic levels? Probably. But is this the solution? Definitely not. I don't think it's anti democratic to keep the system the way we have it now, nor do I think it's un-American. America was founded on the idea of equality of opportunity, not the exact same treatment and grouping of every single citizen: that's just plain ol' communism. So for those who think that AP classes should be rightfully abolished so as to establish a more democratic society, you have it backwards.

If one thinks about it realistically, what would our academic environment gain from teaching all students at the same level? Surely not higher levels of education. Surely the students that were previously from college prep wouldn't all of the sudden have the resources necessary to keep up with the AP students. Surely the AP students wouldn't benefit from a less stimulating environment. Not to mention the teachers having a much more difficult time teaching to an even broader spectrum of students. It's not only a lose lose situation, but a lose lose LOSE situation. Neither group of students, nor the faculty would benefit from this change.

I fear that this debate will be quite biased considering the fact that every single one of us is in at least two AP classes, but you can't blame us. You can't ignore the facts that slap you in the face with evidence that things should be left the way they are now.

The major concern of the proponents would seem to be that CP students aren't given enough recognition or opportunities compared to the AP students; I would have to disagree. Even Mr. Geib himself thinks that AP students are under recognized by not only the school, but their parents too. FIRE is offered for anyone who needs it, not just

freshman, so there is no need for AP kids to be infused in college prep classes in order to increase the intelligence level or provide extra help.

Now back to the equality of opportunity. It's not as if certain kids are shut out from AP classes. Everyone has the opportunity to try and get in, and that sounds like American democracy to me. It's not as if the AP kids are an "elitist group" that inherit our spots through a blood line or something. Every single one of us worked hard to get to where we are now, and we don't deserve to have that opportunity taken away from us.

Sinead Gilman | [April 12, 2012 6:21 PM](#)

I don't think academic equality is what the school system should be aiming for, it should be doing what is best for the INDIVIDUAL student's needs, and by no means are everyone's academic needs the same. The majority of my peers in AP would be bored in CP classes, and I'm sure several of the CP kids might not feel up to the extra work that AP entitles. With that said, however, I would just like to say that so many of my peers are over-generalizing this argument. Not all College Prep kids are lazy, unwilling to do work, druggies, or whatever other titles you feel like throwing at them. Perhaps they knew they would be in for a tough enough year with SATs, ACTs, and getting their licenses that they didn't want an extra weight on their shoulders.

I spent the first semester of my freshman year at Ventura High School, and believe me I got out of there as soon as I had the chance. I took College Prep English that year, and I honestly did not learn a single thing. We would get different tests, alternating every other one, and I would still encounter the students next to me trying to copy off me! Many people complain about Foothill and how they wish they were at a "normal high school", but trust me you are all so lucky that you get the opportunity to attend Foothill. The teachers are phenomenal, the curriculum is more challenging but definitely more rewarding, and the students here are FAR more accepting than that of Ventura or Buena. Even though I am so happy that I had the prospect of transferring to Foothill, it makes me pity those who are unhappy at "traditional" high schools that A. either didn't get into Foothill, or B. didn't have enough money for private school. No one should have a disadvantage due to luck or income.

This is the first year I have been in an Honors/AP class, so I guess I've seen this issue from both perspectives. I've had Honors kids look down on me for taking the "easy, unmotivated, slacker" way out, and I've gotten the "Wow, you're taking AP? Genius! Female Einstein! Bravo!" Kidding about the last part. But I have experienced this from both sides, and neither one feels good. Being looked down upon is hurtful, and having people think you're stuck when you're just trying to get by is not a great feeling either.

It has frustrated me to no end how disgustingly prideful some of my fellow AP students can be. "If you're taking college prep, you might as well be working at McDonald's for the rest of your life." Hey, a job's a job buddy. "College Prep = Ventura College, and you know that gets you no where." Hmm... maybe someone doesn't have an extra \$30,000 to spend on college tuition?

To be honest, I am completely dreading the Socratic tomorrow since I know that so many people will get heated on this subject, most likely including myself. I simply don't like speaking much in front of class because SO many of the kids are arrogant and feel that their opinion matters much more than mine, and tend to shut down those who don't completely agree with them.

To sum it up, no, AP and College Prep classes should not be integrated nor one or the other be eliminated. I would say, however, that many of the AP students should not be so critical towards CP classes. Perhaps the CP students might not be as harsh toward our judgment.

Jordan Schindler | [April 12, 2012 6:27 PM](#)

I remember elementary school like it was yesterday. I was always one of the "smart" kids who received that consistent 100% on my assignments, finished my work early, and earned the title of "teacher's pet". School was just easy for me. I finished my work easily and without difficulty and that was that. Middle school was pretty much the same, with just a little more of a challenge to it, and I continued to breeze through school. When high school came, I took honors English freshman year. It actually challenged me and it was a weird feeling for me. I remember being shocked that a "B" was the equivalent of an "A". Taking honors English and world history last year and amex this year, along with challenging math and science courses, I began to feel challenged in high school. School

was no longer a simple daily ritual I attended to 180 days a year, but rather something I had to work for and make a true effort for. I learned what it feels like to get frustrated at my homework because I just don't understand it and quite honestly, just don't want to do it!

Although it can be tough, I have learned so much in AP classes that I never could have in CP classes. It isn't because CP classes are "bad", but simply because they are taught at a less complex level. Less is expected of students, and tasks are not as challenging. And that is that. If I got the memo that AP classes were no longer going to be allowed, I would be upset. The honors, AP, and other higher level courses are what have pushed me and made me truly work hard.

What infuriates me most about this entire topic is the argument that it is the job of smarter people to help less smart people- because it's not! In the end, you are on your own. That struggling student won't get to write his tutor's name and achievements next to his on his college applications, so why should some students hamper their future for the benefit of others? It isn't my job to take only CP classes, meet some academically struggling students, and hold their hand as they go through their high school curriculum. If CP students need help, they must seek it, just the same as AP students do. Mr. Geib said so himself that everyone has the opportunity to be in amex, so why should CP students hate on AP students? I don't doubt that there are AP snobs, but that is a stereotype, just like all CP students are dumb druggies.

The bottom line is that communism just doesn't work. It never has, and never will. Forcing the integration of currently segregated classes is simply another attempt at making everyone equal, which we know will never entirely happen. I know that the minute AP classes were taken away (if this were to happen), that there would be riots of angry students, parents, and teachers storming upon whoever changed the academic system. Life isn't fair and we just have got to get over. Just like some people are athletic or good singers or brilliant actors, some people are more intelligent and need higher level classes. If we were to take away AP, then we might as well let anyone who wants to be on a sports team join the team no matter their ability. At one time or another, AP and CP students end up in the same class and they mingle and all is unified in the world. So let us just calm down and not be so rash, and restrain from messing with the already sufficient education system.

George Myring | [April 12, 2012 7:05 PM](#)

I find myself in correlation with all Amex students that have blogged about the absurdities of ridding Foothill of its AP courses. I however do not believe in the standard two-tiered hierarchy of students. Draw a line that separates students into one of two sides. The variety of students is much broader than just achievers and slackers. We have our slackers, our procrastinators, our Average Joe's and Jane's that just briskly walk through school, our Joe's and Jane's though may not have God-given academic brilliance still want to find challenge and our students that supposedly had angel's weep and cheer at their birth and whom whenever they enter the room a parade of rainbows, unicorns, dwarves and dazzling sunlight follow. You can not classify students as this or that, there is no white or black, just a few shades of gray.

I am not the first and I will not be the last to state that bringing together AP and CP students will accomplish nothing. Why? Because of the attitudes I have just mentioned. All to be gained through combining these student classifications are increased statistics of cheaters in the classroom. Who honestly believes in trickle down intelligence? Is it possible? To be frank, it's inconceivable! I believe that we all have the potential to be equally academic but some where along the way in our early school years we make the subconscious decision of whether or not we want to give a crap about school. When this decision is made, I am assuming some time in elementary school when cliques begin to form, our future slackers and academic achievers (and all in between) begin to develop and there is very little that any outside information can do to change that. Currently I am a FIRE leader and, though she is no longer here, I like to think about one of my students I use to help. Her name was Tatum and I guess you would call her one of those "slackers". Every grade check she would have 3-5 F grades every time. Despite expressed disappointment and continued offer of assistance Tatum always said "Oh don't worry George, I'll bring them up by next week!" with seemingly sincere smile on her face. Next week, no change. From what I gathered Tatum never desired to push herself and wanted to have fun with friends; grades were a mere commodity she cared nothing for. Now would getting rid of those 9th grade honors and math classes help improve Tatum and

high-schoolers like her as students? would their grades suddenly sky rocket and I would've seen all A's? I'll put my eggs in the basket labeled "HELLLLLLL NO!"

Now with the same principles applying to 11th and 12th grade AP courses, how much different will the scenario be? Will our fellow 11th graders here at Foothill be miraculously "cured" from the state of slackerosity? Will we see there grades rise? If by surrounding them by the "light" of the AP students will the "darkness" be vanquished? Probably not. All we have now is Slacker Steve and God-Blessed Gracie in the same classroom, they will continue to go there separate way in school both achieving in their unique way.

Mariela Camacho | [April 12, 2012 7:10 PM](#)

As far as I most of the smartest and most talented people in our school aren't in AP . And if they wanted to they could easily be. But they are just too busy using their time doing other things that they find more entertaining. For example, you might find it useful to spend everyday of the week doing chapter packets and memorizing bones but maybe a kid in CP prefers to spend his time building his own computer. And you might be in AP and are planning to become a doctor and make so much money, but one of the kids in CP is probably going to grow up and be the next Tim Burton. So AP isn't were all of the most talented student are. Sure the learning environment is better and their seams to be more people trying, but that doesn't mean that all the kids in CP are lazy idiots on drugs. And as I recall CP students aren't the only ones on drugs. So everyone in AP isn't perfect so maybe they should stop acting like they are. That is part of the problem of why the kids in CP feel like they are inferior, because the kids in AP feel superior.

So today in photography I asked my friend why he wasn't in any AP or honors classes even though he seems to understand everything so well and do it with ease, and he said that it seemed to just be a waste of time when he had other more important things to do that would actually help with his future career. And that it didn't really matter that he wasn't being recognized as part of the top class because of after two years he could just transfer collages. And the more I think of it the more he seems right. Why do we put ourselves through all of this. I'm not sure if I can handle it anymore or if I even want to try. Some things in life are more important than school and people should try to understand that.

Rachel Crane | [April 12, 2012 7:18 PM](#)

My academic career in one word: luck. Pure, dumb, ridiculously fortunate luck. By some mercy of God, Allah, the Holy Krishna or pure coincidence — whichever explanation suits your fancy -- I was given a ludicrous amount of opportunity simply by being born.

After countless hours of intense scientific research and dissecting my genome I can safely assume that my "achievements" can be broken down as thus: 50% encouragement from respected elders, 30% genetics, and 20% actual work ethic. See the blind luck? 80% of my academic career is a matter of being in the right place at the right time and having things line up the right way.

I had no control over whether or not my mother was going to be overbearing and say the word "college" repeatedly until it became a mantra engrained in my infantile brain. Nor did I have control over whether or not I would have a learning disability, or whether or not my dad cared enough to teach me how to read when I was four, or if my family would make enough money to buy everything I need for school, or if I would have a sister who would get accepted to Mound and Foothill therefore securing my spot at each school, or whether or not my 8th grade teacher made all of her GATE kids take Honors English in high school, etc. These factors were not mine to choose, yet they are some of the most important factors that have shaped my academic career. I am simply lucky.

It doesn't take much detective work to figure out what a homogeneous group AmEx is. An overwhelming majority of us come from middle class families who instill the value of higher education and academic excellence from birth. Undoubtedly, there are exceptions, there are the people who overcome uncaring parents and learning disabilities. But this blog isn't focusing on the exceptions so much as the rule. And so, keeping along with the sweeping generalizations made by some of the previous posters, I'd like to say that you have much more than yourself to thank for your class rank.

And I think we, myself included, need to start realizing that not everyone gets the same chances that we do. Some people have debilitating dyslexia, or absentee parents, or crappy teachers, and some people just come to the conclusion that life should be a balance between work and play. That doesn't make them "lesser" people or unmotivated

losers.

Yet, we (especially myself) tend to forget that about college prep kids. We're proud of our accomplishments, as we should be, but it seems as though we take the accomplishments for granted and tend to do so in an arrogant way. Even today, when Mr. Geib showed us the Benchmark tests that he decided not to give us. The class scoffed when Geib read the first question aloud, like the district test was simply beneath us fine and genius AP kids. And then the test was thrown in the trash, just to further emphasize that unsaid point. We can undoubtedly be egotistic, smug, and pretentious students.

However, just as you can't punish CP kids by rubbing your "superiority" in their face whilst carrying around that false sense of entitlement we've all toted at one (multiple) point(s) or another, you can't punish AP kids by taking away AP courses. Oppressing AP kids isn't any better than oppressing CP kids, even if you're claiming equality.

The plain fact is that some people are just smarter than others, which feels almost taboo to say in this everyone-gets-a-trophy-for-trying society. Some people just work harder than other people, are more dedicated than other people, like learning more than other people, etc. And while not all of these students are in AP, it would be a lie to say that the majority aren't (just as it would be a lie to say that everyone in AP is ridiculously brilliant and dedicated). AP courses give these types of students an environment in which they can reach their full potential without being hindered by people who need to spend more time learning material.

AP is a choice. Granted, it's not one that's available to many students, but regardless, it is still a choice. We weren't headhunted by Mr. Bova and locked into a room to have literary tropes thrown down our tracheas and college prep kids weren't cornered by Mrs. Adams and forced to read *A Lesson Before Dying*. Why would taking away this choice ever be a good thing?

Amanda Torres | [April 12, 2012 7:26 PM](#)

Should college prep classes and AP classes be integrated? No. Why? Because it's just not efficient. In elementary school when kids are learning to read teachers break up the class into reading groups. Do you remember those? There was the green group for the advanced readers, the yellow group for the kids who did well, the orange group for the kids who stumbled over more words, and lastly, the red group for the kids who needed prompting and extra help from the teacher. I, an "AP student", was in the orange group. My teacher didn't separate us to make orange and red kids feel inferior, we were separated so she could give us more focused and individualized attention. Because of that focused attention my orange buddies and I were able to become better readers. If we had all been in one group, we would have never read out loud when we popcorn read because the green and yellow kids would have dominated. It would have taken me many more years for to become a better reader.

AP kids are elitist. Okay, okay, not everyone is a snob, but when your uncle comes over to a barbeque and asks what classes your taking in school you don't say American History; you say you're in AP US History. In fact, you say you're in AmEx and you talk about how rigorous the joint advanced classes are and that you enjoy them.

I am an elitist, snobby, grade grubbing, AP kid. I guess I should be ashamed of it, but no one (since I only vocalize it to other snooty AP kids) has tried putting me in my place. Don't freak out I don't think I'm a better person than kids in college prep, I'm in no way morally superior or anything like that. But, I definitely see myself a little higher on the academic totem pole.

This is going to bite me in the ass.

It's a false sense of superiority. Yes, there will be plenty of circumstances when my advanced courses will give me greater opportunities. I will go to a good college. I will get a good job. I will be on top, like I always have been... except for in 2nd grade, but that doesn't count. There it is, I have always been on top, and so have basically every single one of the kids in our class. It's what makes us special. Who gets 5 awards at the middle school assembly? I do. Because I'm in GATE. Those five awards make me special. Of course Middle School doesn't count for anything, but I still carry those awards assemblies with me. (My friends and I would try to get a spot at the front so we didn't have to keep walking down the bleachers. Snobby, I know.)

Here's where it bites me. I don't try to do anything I'm not already good at or think I have the potential to be good at. It's called APitis, and it's inhibiting. There will probably be

many opportunities that I won't take part in because I'm too afraid of doing poorly. (I'm aware of how sad that is.) The worst part of APitis is that one day, I won't be on top. Maybe it will be senior year, or in college, or when I become a doctor. At any of those points, I could easily slip from this imaginary "top" I've created around myself, and my world would crash. It's tragic. What makes this even more tragic is that I'm not the only one who thinks like this.

Colleges want well-rounded students. How well-rounded am I if I can't handle failure?

Sean O'Keefe | [April 12, 2012 7:30 PM](#)

First of all, having AP classes doesn't segregate the school. Like Mr. Geib said in class today, anyone that wants to be in AP can be AP, they just have to be willing to challenge themselves. On the other hand, there are those in AP that feel as if they are on a whole other level when being compared to CP students. I find this assumption poorly based and ridiculous. Some of the smartest people I know don't take Amex solely because they don't care for the homework load. Does this make them any less smart? Sure there are people in CP classes that don't take AP classes because they can't keep up with the course and therefore can't comprehend the material but I don't think that AP students should put themselves on a pedestal because of this. The Amex course moves very fast and AP students shouldn't go around rubbing the fact that they get more points for their G.P.A. in everyone else's face. In the end, some of the people enrolled in AP/Honors classes may be elitist but the program itself is not. Therefore, AP/Honors classes should not be taken away just because of the behavior of some of the students.

Emilia Covault replied to [comment from Sean O'Keefe](#) | [April 12, 2012 9:52 PM](#)

This is good.

Hannah Youngerman | [April 12, 2012 8:03 PM](#)

My mother has worked at Oxnard High School for the past ... eh...21 years or so. I don't wear the OHS jacket just because I like the colors. Anyway, she's "graduating" with us in 2013, and leaving with her is the French curriculum that she (practically) designed and brought to life. 21 years ago, all of her periods were filled with students; there were 5 full periods with about 35 students to a room. Impressive for a language class, right? My mother always recalls the first 10 years of her program as being possible because of the smart, willing, hardworking, intuitive students who really cared about school, college, themselves, and reaching their full potential. I was around 6 years old when I went in to my mom's classroom for the first time. Oxnard High School? When you were 6 years old? Wait...isn't that like...super scary? No! My mom propped me up on her desk chair and told the students to listen to the sentences that I read out of my favorite French story about a dog and a subway in Paris. They all laughed and repeated the said sentences and squealed about how undeniably adorable I was (of course).

I visited my mom's classroom periodically from then on, but it was never quite the same. Slowly, I saw the classrooms deteriorate. More students were falling asleep, more students had tattoos, more students sat there and slumped for 45 minutes and then bolted out the door. However, I did still get the occasional comment on how adorable I was. But aside from that, it was a completely different atmosphere in the same class as when I was 6. It was shocking.

Last year, my mom doubled and taught college prep World Civics for a period. We, in Eulau's class, had just finished the Holocaust unit, and my mom said that they were just starting it, so she wanted me to come in on one of our school's days off and see how Foothill is compared to Oxnard. Let me tell you, it's completely different. I walked into the room and said hey to all her sophomores, and sat down at her desk like I usually do when I visit. Somewhere in the back of the room, a boy said, "So, are you like, super smart or something?". I looked at my mom in utter confusion and she informed me that she had mentioned that I go to Foothill. I nodded and said, "Um, no. She made me go there". I guess they didn't really believe me because one girl added, "But Foothill has 'technology' in it, so you have to be like a geek or something". It was lightly ridiculous but all of the comments in that room weren't thought out with proper brain power.

As awful as it sounds, as that class went on, I realized that I was smarter than most of the kids in there. Hell, I was smarter than ALL of the kids in that room. Not because I'm some super genius, not because I'm planning on going to Harvard, but because I try in school. That particular period at Oxnard High School was not trying even a little bit! And if

they were, it wasn't obvious, because I was looking for an inkling of hope in there. Sometimes, my mom would ask me to answer questions when no one else could, just to see if maybe I would... rub off? on them? I'm not sure exactly, but you know what I mean. Not in a snobbish way, either. Anyway, any questions that I answered, the class's expression stayed the same: solemn, bored, probably hungry.

I'm not saying that every college prep class is like my mom's one World Civics period. I'm just saying that there are students who honestly just don't give a flying *#@! about school. I'm also saying that that may be the difference between Oxnard and Foothill. Not that everyone in Foothill is studious and really determined to go somewhere, but that we obviously do well enough to set a standard.

Putting myself in that world civ class did not help my mom's period. They weren't inspired, hopeful, or suddenly bursting with energy to learn. They just didn't care. I'd like to think that we AP kids really care about what we learn and that's why we chose to do AP. And that's not saying that CP kids don't care! Of course they do! But...!

Nevermind, this blog is a mess. You can't make it so everyone wins. There will always be smarter people, there will always be prettier people, there will always be richer people. There will always be someone above someone else and that's the way it works. That may not be fair, but neither is life.

AP and CP students are equally amazing and wonderful people.

Eric Moll | [April 12, 2012 8:05 PM](#)

This blog is very interesting as it brings up a question begged throughout the year: are AP kids elitist? The answer (at least for me) is, sadly yes. However, this in no way means we should combine College Prep and AP classes.

To put it plain and simple, I have worked extremely hard to where I am now; I continuously work under immense stress and with much work; I feel a little bit entitled to be elitist. All these traits are terrible and I wish I didn't feel them but, I can't change it, no matter how hard I try. For example, when one of my colleagues, as I don't consider him close enough to be a friend, at the beginning of the year, bragged about how far he was in history, I got pissed. Even now when it comes up it angers me to no end, and I want to shove all the things I have learned above what he did. But, this action would only bring even more anger to myself, so I hold back. It sounds very violent but I do commonly feel entitled to severe pride about what I have learned in Amex; even though, and I can't emphasize this enough, I don't want to feel this way.

Secondly, AP doesn't segregate people. I think, for the large majority, the AP kids are similarly motivated: in academics, to go to college, to have a career that requires much knowledge, to learn rigorously, etc. This essentially is why the majority of AP kids are distinguished as such. The AP programs have not segregated schools; the motivations and similarities among kids have caused friend groups and segregations. I hang out at lunch with a group of people that contains about 75% or less AP kids. This is simply because we all get along well and aren't affected by AP/College Prep rifts, even though I feel elitist sometimes.

The last, and possibly strongest reason we should not have combination of AP and College Prep classes is because school would become inefficient and not serve everyone, as they need to be. Sometimes people that have excellent math/science skills can't handle Amex, or don't want to, for it is not their strong suit. Sometimes, an active member of Amex can't handle AP math and science for the same reasons. If AP and College Prep classes were combined, school would pump out drones of the same people, colleges couldn't easily differentiate students. Also, the fact always remains that, for a functioning society, we need doctors, lawyers, aka the "intellectual class", and the factory workers, cooks, aka the "working" or "merchant class". Not to say that people with their M.D. can't be factory workers but the converse is not true.

AP classes should not be merged with College Prep counterparts because it would further ruin our education system. It would be like amputating a leg for a simple stubbed toe. AP classes do breed a terrible elitism that I hate, but still feel, but they don't segregate and would not fix the current situation.

David Choi | [April 12, 2012 8:08 PM](#)

I find the proposition to eliminate AP classes absolutely absurd. We were asked if the AP system is un-American, but I find the prospect of eliminating AP classes even more

un-American. Taking away AP classes is taking away the freedom of us students to choose what classes we want to take. Schools shouldn't force us into giant, homogenous classes for the sake of academic equality. Let's be honest, academic equality isn't really possible; some students learn more quickly than other students do, and some students are just smarter than the others. For the sake of each individual student, having the choice of taking a hard class or not is more beneficial than being forced to learn with students that are on different levels of learning ability. Taking away AP classes will motivate neither the former AP nor the former CP students.

Mr. Geib continually asked the class whether or not we think that we should try and benefit society by encouraging other students to learn that otherwise will not have the motivation to do well. Even if mixing the two classes will help some students do better, I still say no. Call me a selfish a-hole, but I don't want any more competition for getting into college. It's tough enough that I'm dealing with all of these super-natural geniuses in AP, but bringing a normally CP-level student on the same level with them will make me pull my hair out. By the way economic diversity is good for us. Where would a lot of us students be if a 4.0 GPA and a 2140 SAT score is average? And I'm not saying let's keep dumb students dumb, I'm saying that with the continually increasing competition in academics, putting everybody on an equal level could almost act as a disincentive. More personally, I feel as if combining the two classes next year would make me feel as if I took a lot of hard classes for no reason. Even in elementary school I was put into that stupid G.A.T.E thing that started my development into the cocky, AP class taking person I am. Because of my constant involvement in the hard-classes, merging the AP and CP classes will make me feel so "average". I'm sure a lot of the students in AMEX would agree that we have a feeling of superiority. Let's be honest, no matter how nice a person you want to be, there isn't a feeling much better than one of being better than others. We can't combine AP and CP because even though the intent would be educational equality, it wouldn't be fair. Some students who are slower learners would struggle to compete with the faster learners. The most democratic way of school would be keeping it the way it is. Let students choose whether or not they want to be in AP or not.

Anthony Balolong-Reyes | [April 12, 2012 8:12 PM](#)

It's never a pleasant feeling to be the recipient, at the bottom of an elitist's nose, of snobbish remarks or hurtful put downs about your ability. I know this feeling. Although it wasn't about my ability in the classroom, it was still an instance of someone of higher status abusing their position to make me feel bad. It was during my freshmen year of water polo. I was playing on the "Frosh-soph" level, the lowest level of high school sports. My teammates and I would always be looked down upon by the stronger, faster, better Varsity players. They wouldn't bother and didn't care to help us improve, but instead they bashed us everyday with hurtful remarks and the ever more hurtful, water polo ball to the face. Now I am at the Varsity level for both swimming and water polo. Ever since my freshmen year, I told myself when I would be on Varsity I would never treat the underclassmen as I was treated. I think the same should be done at school between AP and college prep kids. Is it really necessary to say that you're better than someone because you are in an AP class? So you do hours upon hours of homework and stay up countless nights only to wake up in the morning with your APUSH book by your side. Who says the college prep kids aren't working as hard? Some students might be spending an equal amount of hours on their work because they need to. The classes were designed for different types of students. Those who can handle a challenge take AP, and those who cannot, or can but don't want to, are placed in college prep. I believe these classes should always remain separated. Both classes run at different speeds and attend to each students' abilities.

Even though having AP and college prep classes creates an inequality amongst students, they should never cease to exist. College prep kids are in those classes for a reason, and the same goes for the AP kids. It was their choice; they made that choice based on their ability to succeed. I have a couple college prep friends and they always tease me about being in AP. One time I was told "oh yeah your in AP you're like a super genius." Although I found this flattering, I also thought I'm not really a super genius, I just do more work. Just because we are AP kids doesn't give us the right to look down upon the college prep kids. This is why two separate classes need to remain. You can't put AP kids and college prep kids in the same room; the class just wouldn't run smoothly. Instead of learning there would be insecurity and anxiety of the college prep kids, and the AP students would get bored after finishing their work and wreak havoc in the classroom.

So yes, AP and college prep should remain two different classes. Students of different

caliber need to be exposed to this type of environment. There will always be someone that is above you academically, and there will always be someone under you. I believe that this system of AP and college prep expose us to the real world. We need to learn to respect those below us and those above us. If these two classes were combined it would only create an artificial environment in which there is no superior or inferior. Unless you live in a Communist country, this isn't the real world and shouldn't be implemented into our learning environment.

Alex Tompkins | [April 12, 2012 8:33 PM](#)

So many different things are happening with this blog it isn't even funny. AP is a wonderful thing and I personally enjoy being in the most academic rigorous classes that I possibly can be simply because I like the challenge. I am taking 4 AP courses this year, APUSH AP English, AP Physics, and AP Calc B/C. My life would be radically different if there were no such thing as AP. My GPA would be much lower if all the classes I was in was weighted on a 4.0 scale rather than a 5.0 scale. I enjoy having the "advantage" over the students in College Prep classes when it comes with colleges looking at my application. Almost all of us in Amex will agree that AP gives us AP students the "better deal." We would be disadvantaged compared to how we are now if AP was abolished but that doesn't mean that it is a terrible thing.

Getting rid of AP could be a positive thing if other measures were taken in agreement with it. By itself it might as well be useless I think. If college prep was the only type of class, who is to say that college prep classes couldn't be changed as well as AP being abolished. The classes academic rigor could be upped slightly so that AP students will still be challenged, just not as much, and the students who are in college prep currently won't have to adjust too much anyway. The people who have A's in college prep classes would still probably have an A, maybe a B in the "raised college prep but still lower than AP" class. Those who have B's would have a B maybe C, you get the idea. The point is that even if a kid that has a good grade in a class, just because it is made a little more difficult, doesn't mean that the grade will suffer. We could also have the "raised college prep" class be weighted on a 5.0 scale. After all, weighting scales are different school to school. Buena doesn't even count some freshman honors classes as Weighted for their GPA. I'm pretty confident that some of the people who are in the college prep classes could take the APUSH exam in May and pass with a 3 or higher, just as good as any Amex student and even better than some.

Today in History Mr. Geib brought up the difference between AP Physics and regular Physics to me in class. I brought up the point that the college prep class is only a week or 2 behind us in the curriculum and with that there is not much of a difference. Mr. Geib rebutted that "AP goes much more in depth and shouldn't a student who is more motivated have the right to be in the class to learn more in depth information about a subject?" At the time I had no response but I've thought about it and I came up with a response. If someone was motivated to take AP so that they could learn subjects much more in depth because they are smarter than the college prep classes, if they were put into the college prep class where they weren't taught in as much depth their homework wouldn't take as much time. In that time that is saved because of the easier work load, couldn't they go and learn more in depth through their own personalized research? I find that when I learn something on my own rather than in class it sticks with me more and it means more to me than something that Mr. Weldele is trying to shove down my throat so I can pass the AP exam.

Overall I wouldn't really like it if I couldn't take any AP classes because I think I wouldn't be as challenged and I would be a little too bored at school, but that doesn't mean that it is bad for everyone. I asked my sophomore friend who is in college prep classes about the discussion and the prompt for this blog and his response was "I love that idea. That's the best thing I've heard about in a long time! I mean why should people who decide to take a harder class be treated better as if they're more special than the rest of us." Just because we as Amex students wouldn't be benefitted from AP being abolished doesn't mean that it's so terrible.

Emily Park | [April 12, 2012 8:42 PM](#)

My birthday is exactly four weeks from now today. That's right. On May 10, 2012, I will finally turn sixteen.

I can't exactly comment on this topic from a completely objective perspective. Just like Mr. Geib, my parents groomed me from a very young for academic success, and thus, I have always been on an advanced track.

In the name of equality, my elementary school should have denied my parents' request for me to skip the first grade. Who knows? I could've raised Torrance Elementary School's first grade success rate by one point, or something. Maybe I could have helped my fellow six year-old by telling him that you don't have to start a new line on the paper whenever you start a new sentence. All I know for certain is that I would not have been educated that year, meaning I would have learned nothing new and I would not have been engaged in the classroom. How successful is a school that fails to educate?

A school's purpose is not to make sure everyone is on the same page, but to make sure a student is learning to the best of his or her ability. This necessitates both the CP and AP programs. There are hardworking students who are in CP because they are able to learn and understand better in that kind of setting, for whatever reason. Maybe they don't learn as well in an "A's and Stanford only" kind of environment, but that's okay, if not completely sane. There are others who thrive in academic competition, accelerated pacing, and packed-in curricula--people who believe their potential could be diminished in normal pacing, and AP/honors courses are designed for them. In a sense, this is equality. It's the equality of choice. We all have an equal right to choose between AP or CP, and an equal right to choose what kind of environment our potential will be best fulfilled. After all, we want the same thing: a quality education. If all AP kids were placed in CP classes, there's a good chance a lot of interest would be lost. If all CP kids were placed in AP classes, there's a good chance a lot of interest would be lost. Doesn't sound great to me. We risk even more inequality and disparity between students if we abandon choice and attempt to homogenize.

Anyone saying that putting kids in advanced classes will automatically, without a doubt, lead those kids to put on an air of superiority, hierarchy, and distance is partially wrong. Yes, I have heard the subtle nuances of "those CP kids being different from us", but here's the thing. I bet at least 1/2 of you never realized that I'm supposed to be a sophomore. Almost none of the current sophomores know I'm supposed to be in their classes. I don't mention it because, frankly, I forget about it. I want you to see me as the colleague, not the grade skipper, because that's how I see everyone else. We're all trying to do the same thing here, guys, whether AP, CP, age 15, 18... and that's to get through high school alive and make the journey not so boring. We may have different personal along the way, but there is nothing stopping me from saying that Emilia's sense of academia is much more virtuous than mine, just because she decided to go into college prep. Emilia and I are equals in that we have different strengths and weaknesses, and that we're able to recognize them, respect them, and learn from them.

In a couple of weeks, my friends and I will celebrate my 16th birthday, not as The One Who Kills Herself With AP/Honors Classes, The One Who Takes College Prep Math and AP Humanities, The One Who Takes Higher Level Math and CP Humanities, and The One Who Takes All CP For Reasons Outside of Her Control.. but simply as me and my best friends. And if you ask any one of them, they'll each tell you we're all equal... equally awesome.

Raurie Lindemann | [April 12, 2012 8:52 PM](#)

Being in an AP class takes motivation, intellect, and extremely hard work. We, as current AMEX students, have accepted the challenge of this rigorous course and have every right to be proud of our accomplishments. However, there is a fine line between being proud of yourself and being full of yourself. This blog topic has made me realize just how arrogant AP students can be. This attitude reflects the believed stereotype of AP students, and honestly, it does the image of advanced placement students and teachers no justice whatsoever.

Don't get me wrong, we ARE in a higher level class than those of college prep. We ARE required to think at a higher level. Oh, and we study, A LOT. But that doesn't give us the right to look down on college prep students. Because, contrary to what some of you may believe, CP students work hard as well. Most of them do their homework and study and behave and are actually motivated to do well in school. Yes, because even those who CHOOSE to not be in AP classes have motivation to make more of their life than working at a fast food restaurant (crazy, right?).

And since this has been previously mentioned, I feel the need to address the connection between college prep students and drugs.. Um, really? Not all CP students are druggies, and not all AP students are completely clean. You cant assume stereotypes because they're almost never true. And the fact that some AP kids have made this assumption is actually kind of pathetic. I mean, some of my best friends are in college prep, and I can

assure you they aren't druggies and actually have plans for their life besides working at McDonalds.

To bring up another point, a lot of us, including myself, are in regular math classes. So if we're going to feel superior to college prep English and History classes, doesn't an honors math class have the right to feel and act superior towards regular math? That doesn't seem very fair. But in all seriousness, comparing any honors/AP course to CP will end up in the same sort of argument.

Okay, back to the actual prompt.. As I said before, AP students have become accustomed to fast paced learning and difficult material; we learn at a higher level. It would make no sense to combine AP and CP. AP students would be held back from reaching their full potential, while CP would struggle to keep up. Basically, combing classes wouldn't be fair to the students and would never have any success.

Patrick Hoffman | [April 12, 2012 8:55 PM](#)

I did not want to enroll in Foothill but my parents forced me to come here. In middle school, I skated by with a 4.0 every quarter. I thrived in my middle school where my friends and I greatly disrupted most of the classes we were in while still achieving good grades. Coming to foothill with no friends, an environment similar to what I experienced in middle school would have been comforting. Freshmen year I was in as many honors classes as I could take, but like everyone else, I was in college prep biology. I may have been one of those kids in Anna-Marie's biology class that contributed to the constant disruption, and, I enjoyed being in that class. Last year, I was in all college prep, but by that time, I was way over the general laziness and lack of push for academic excellence. If I had to pick whether to abolish AP or not, I would pick neither. If I had my choice, I would go to Ventura High and be in AP courses there, while being with all my friends, and avoiding the some of the weaker students that would hold the class farther back than me and my friends already would. But that's beside the point. The fact of the matter is that AP classes should not be abolished. Without AP, none of the smarter kids in school would be able to further their intelligence. The gap of academic performance would deplete greatly if there were just one standard class. The kids in AP classes are the future Ivy League graduates. The future doctors, politicians, and c.e.o.s of America.

For Mr. Geib to say that there are just as smart of kids in college prep as AP classes is possible, but highly improbable. If one of those kids does exist at foothill, then they are holding themselves back by not placing themselves in the AP classes. Besides, the educational system is a system that supports equality. If someone wants to go into AP, they can. If someone doesn't, they can go into college prep. Mixing up both classes could offer some interesting and positive outcomes, but all in all it's a bad idea. An AP workload being forced upon college prep kids is an educational train wreck; as well as, giving AP kids college prep wouldn't be challenging enough and another train wreck would ensue. AP furthers the intelligence of those in the course, which in the long run furthers the stronghold America has on being one of the strongest countries in the world.

Usually on most of the blogs, both sides of the argument are very well presented and most of the time I have a hard time taking a stance distinctly on one side; but for this blog, I see it as impossible for anybody, especially 100 AP kids, to want AP and CP classes to be abolished and just have one standard class, unless you are a pure communist and don't want America to be the strongest country it can be.

Emily Coe | [April 12, 2012 9:08 PM](#)

I chose to take AP courses. I'm definitely not the smartest, nor near the smartest student in our junior class, but I try. I want to challenge myself to do things that I know I'm capable of doing, no matter how hard they may seem to be. Similarly, some of my peers chose to take CP. It's all choices, with a slight influence of genes, but that's a whole different blog topic previously discussed.

As far as academic equality goes, since when have academics ever been equal? It'd be communism. Everyone is different. School has become a competition. Not everyone has the same intelligence level, not can everyone achieve the same intelligence level. It's they way our brains work. We can't change it. We can try and push ourselves to do our very best but in the big picture, life isn't fair.

Taking away AP classes would be stupid. You'd still have kids falling behind, but then you'd add a group of students who would be bored and who would possibly become less smart because they don't have the rigorous curriculum and speed they need to keep moving forward. People learn in different ways and at different speeds. It's fact.

I don't think that CP students are necessarily not as smart as AP students. There are so many factors that go into determining one's intelligence. Maybe the CP student has family issues. Maybe they just don't apply themselves, they aren't interested, they want to be with friends. Whatever it may be, we shouldn't be judging people by what classes they are in. One of my friends, who chose to take CP classes this year, is one of the smartest people I know. He knows so much that it blows my mind to think that one person's brain can contain all of that knowledge. Even though he's a genius, he chose to take CP. That doesn't make him dumb, it just gives him time to accomplish his other goals in life. Going to a high-up 4-year university right out of high school isn't for everyone. And to be honest, a lot of us probably wouldn't be taking all of these hard classes if it wasn't for the competition to get into the highest colleges.

Joe Vielbig | [April 12, 2012 9:10 PM](#)

A fair warning before I begin: I've had a long day at school, just finished taking a 3 hour mock ACT test, my mom and sister are in another heated "debate" over her (my sister, thankfully) wearing strapless bras (my opinion: who cares), and my right bicep has been twitching incessantly for the past hour thanks to the awkward height of the desk I'm working at, so if you notice a lack of the usual attempt at philosophical intros and the occasional slip of "higher level" vocabulary words, my apologies up front. And so I begin:

Like a majority of my fellow APUSH students, I view the whole socialistic, "equal-opportunities" idea of throwing AP and College Prep kids together as absolutely preposterous. I couldn't help but chuckle to myself when I saw Clare Riley's opinion of BioScience Survey last year and how that was representative of what would happen if such an idea were really enacted. Granted, I think we did more arts and crafts than any other college prep or AP class on campus, (apart from perhaps Biology – those stupid concept cards), but I can speak from experience that staple-shooting and yardstick-slapping wars were far from rare. I think that students should be able to choose the type and amount of challenge they want from their academic career. The overarching phrase which Mr. Geib likes to point out at times: *Non scholae, sed vitae discimus* – We do not learn for the school, but for life. The true purpose of the public, and private, for that matter, school system is to educate. Academics seem to fit the stereotype for what that education entails, but it is the school's job to provide opportunity; it should help you craft your own tools out of their different molds to build your life as you see fit. There is no "one size fits all" in education.

As so many others have pointed out, class readings are the perfect example of the problems of "integration", so to speak. Granted, my situation may be a little different than most, but as most of you probably know, about a month ago I was suspended for a week. I won't go into the specifics, as I'm sure you've all heard some of the "theories" circling around (I must say, some of you have very creative imaginations), but long story short, I was required to attend what I liked to call the "bad boy" school. From 12-4pm every day that week, I, the "sheltered", Christian, never-has-gotten-a-detention or a tardy all high school career kid, went to the City Corps building with other individuals "incarcerated" for the likes of routine vodka selling, knife pulling, pot smoking, and severe beating up of ex-boyfriends, to be properly "educated". And in those 4 hours each day, we attempted to read the entire Shakespearian play, *Macbeth*. If you thought read-around textbook reading was bad in middle school... Let's just say that "ghetto-talk" and old English don't mix real well. When you ask if we should be exposed to gangsters or other colorful characters for the purpose of broadening our knowledge of our experience, Mr. Geib, ironically, I kind of have to agree somewhat to that question. Yes, they would pass around cigarettes when the teacher had his back turned (keep in mind, these were all freshmen), and yes, they would get in comedic (in the sense of their enthusiasm being unusually humorous) discussions of who had gotten or would be getting what STD from whom, but they all had a certain respect for me (in part, maybe due to the fact that I had the longest "sentence" out of all of them), and I, them. That's not to say that I would ever choose to "hang out" with them, or visa versa, as I sat there doing my Calculus homework while a group of them attempted to play Yatsee for money (not sure how that quite worked out...), but nonetheless, they had their own goals in life and I had mine. Whether I agreed with theirs is apart from the point, and I'm fairly certain that they wouldn't necessarily pick an AP class on a whim, but they should have the right and ability to choose what path they want to follow, just the same as you and me.

Now that's not to profile and say that all college-prep kids are vodka selling, knife pulling, pot smoking, boyfriend-beating immature freshmen, (though some are), and that's also not to say that no AP kids aren't either (though I don't know of really any AMEX kids selling bottles of vodka...). There are just as many egotistical snobs in college prep as there are in AP – academics isn't always what people brag about. Personally, I find that form of arrogance extremely annoying, and if I ever exhibit it (which I hope I don't or haven't), I apologize upfront. People have their own driving force to achieve, and they shouldn't be hindered or made uncomfortable by having the bar be placed for them at a point too low or high because the differing platforms were replaced by the "one size fits all" height. The American Dream is one in which you craft your own destiny (don't question me on the legitimacy of the ability to fulfill that), so why should a school restrict that? Yes, we want "No Child Left Behind", but does that mean that the fastest racers should keep pace with the slowest, or the slowest with the fastest, just so they all can finish together? How are the faster runners supposed to improve if they can't push themselves? And how are the slower ones supposed to enjoy running if they're being yanked along at a pace that is highly uncomfortable and well out of their range? There's a reason why they split it up into JV and Varsity. I know plenty of people who would love to be Varsity, and I know plenty of others who are completely, 100% content with where they are. Do you hear a cry to eliminate all performance divisions and race everyone together? I'd highly doubt it. So why then, are we asking to change this?

Devin Kelly | [April 12, 2012 9:10 PM](#)

When faced with the question of whether all students should work in the same academic environment instead of being separated into classes of different levels of learning, is one that many may think has a strong bias depending on the current class of the student. I for one have been in college prep up until junior year and fully understand the dynamics that make up both situations. Yes it is true, on one hand you have college prep that has more students that don't try than AP and Advanced Placement contains a higher percentile of overachievers. This is the best way that school can work and this is how life works. AP is an opportunity to learn and test your ability to persevere. A student can be in either class and get good grades, or be in either class and go to a good college; this is accomplished by the student, not the class type. Someone who doesn't put effort into school has the opportunity to take AP and challenge their self, but will they take the step? The ones who work diligently and have drive, get ahead, this goes for all aspects of life as I see it. Give up and settle for less, well that is mainly your choice, and it will only lead you further and further to nowhere. Separating AP would be a terrible mistake, why take from hardworking students what gives them a better learning experience and useful preparation. We should all conform and be in one class because somebody can't just try? Positive influence on a struggling student is more than welcome, but what good is making us all condense, if we have the choice to choose a different option because we see the benefits? Hindering students is not what we need.

Nothing is wrong with being in college prep. There are many CP students that put the same effort in their academics as students in AP. Should we though also make all universities teach the same thing, have the same tuition, and have the same acceptance standard as everyone else? Isn't there a good reason for having different levels of college, and jobs, and incomes, and house's? Or should we make those all the same to? I mean we don't want someone left behind right? Wait! We should reduce our country to a poverty stricken land of starvation so we can make other third world countries not look so down in the dumps. This is obviously much more intense, but we can never take such an action like this. We must give options. No matter which you pick you can have the same successful life as any AP super overachiever, choices people, we don't make them for others; we make them for ourselves. Putting us together wouldn't in any way shape or form increase academic "equality", anyone can take AP, anyone can get A's and anyone can make something of their life without some "Smarty" looking over their shoulder saying "Hey, why don't you try a little harder?" We're all equal because we all have the same power: choice, putting us in the same class can't be defined as equal treatment at all; it is simply a step backwards for education.

Old Greg replied to [comment from Devin Kelly](#) | [April 12, 2012 9:35 PM](#)

watchu doin in my waters

Bryn Gallagher | [April 12, 2012 9:25 PM](#)

The substitute, an older teacher, sat down defeated, some tears falling from her face. She tried to hide it, it's not smart to show weakness as a substitute teacher but we had shook her belief in education and maybe our generation itself. She had been teaching for 40 years and had never, ever met a class like ours.

Now Spanish is one of those programs that isn't AP the whole way through so of course I was in an integrated class, and man was it integrated. Sure there were the psycho APers the ones that listen constantly and are afraid to not take enough notes but there were some pretty... well relaxed... students too. The girl at my table was telling us about the drugs she was going to take and what she and her boyfriend were planning for the weekend (things that I could have probably lived my whole life without having to know). Another kid felt the need to interrupt the class every few minutes for things that we could have gone without; and this was the class without the substitute.

Never have I seen a teacher destroyed like the substitute we had she was taunted and down right ignored and not me nor any of my studious peers spoke up to help her. No one wants to be the kid who says "Hey guys I think we should study!" So paper planes flew, shouts sounded, chaos descended and no one spoke up against it. The sub notified us all that she was not going to teach again, teaching wasn't worth facing that.

Even on it's best behavior that class was a mess and I can assure you that I did not learn anything in that class, and it is not that I wasn't challenged by Spanish (come on, it's another language) or because I hate school and I'm not going to blame the teacher either it was because that environment was not a good one for learning. Integrating a bunch of academically minded kinds with ones who were not so just created a dysfunctional atmosphere where no one learned.

Now I am aware that my life looks like one of the classic elitist: a white middle class girl in AP courses who does ballet, wears Toms, tries to get coffee from independents, rides to school in a Prius, goes to ballet programs every summer, and is now writing her blog on a Mac, oh and did I mention I prefer farmer's market vegetables? Yeah I know it reeks of elitism but that is not the reason why I want AP.

I want them simply because I like to learn and I don't learn as well in an environment where nobody seems to care. Surely lots of CP kids do care, a lot, but they are much quieter than the ones that don't, just like me in my Spanish class.

I'm not saying that everyone doesn't care in CP or everyone does in AP but isn't it fair to assume that those who opt for a more rigorous class are more likely to work in them?

Lauren Cacatian | [April 12, 2012 9:29 PM](#)

If somebody in an AP class claims that they've never felt superior to a student in college prep at any moment this year, they're either Jesus reincarnated or an extreme liar. I may be one of the first to admit that I have frequently looked down upon college prep kids with a snooty attitude whenever I have a conversation with them. It's terrible, and I'm ashamed. But it's an unfortunate side effect that comes with being in an advanced class, partly because we are constantly being told how much more meticulous and complex the course is, and how lucky we are to be in such a sophisticated position. But it makes me even more upset that I do it, because I have been looked down upon from other students in the AP classes, and I know how unpleasant the feeling is. I will never be brilliant enough to go to UCLA or Stanford, but some students are, and they know it. After having this sort of revelation, I realized how upsetting it is that there is such a generalization and feeling of elitism amongst AP kids, especially at Foothill. But the truth is, we ARE advanced students. The course title is called advanced placement for a pretty good reason. We ARE taking classes which are more difficult and much more strenuous than others offered here at Foothill, because we want to be challenged and feel like we have the ability to pass through the year in the class. But in absolutely no way can you expect both college prep and advanced placement kids to have the same goals and level of ambition. That's why there are separate courses, and in my perspective, they are both effective and beneficial.

AP classes are both a privilege and a right. It is a privilege to have them in the school, because they provide more of an advantage when learning about subjects that would be hard to get if the course just scratched the surface. It is a right, because it is rightfully provided to all students in the district if they are willing to accept the challenges they might face. Because of the fact that this opportunity is available to all, it isn't really as much of an unfair advantage as others may make it out to be. However, there is an inevitable gap in the student body that distinguishes between those who do their work

efficiently and those who don't try at all. Integrating all students at a normal level may sound ideal to some people, but I don't believe it is a realistic thought if they are expected to perform at the same level.

I am currently in a College-Prep elective that mixes a couple of AP students with an ocean of those who have never walked into an honors course. I am so interested in the subject and absolutely adore the teacher. But there are moments during the class when I want to pull out my hair and the hair of others. The class is always being disrupted and interrupted by students who aren't used to a class that has a fast pace. Although it is college prep, it's impossible to be passive about the workload and the tests are anything but a cinch. Because of this, many students have to work at a slower pace—slowing the class down and ultimately leading me to start picking my split ends to pass the wasted time. The teacher has to pay more attention to the kids who are asking questions after every powerpoint slide, although they weren't even paying attention to the lecture to start with. These students were never challenged as much as they are in this class, and it's starting to affect the entire pace of the class and curriculum. I'm not sure exactly what the plan would be once AP is terminated, but if mixing college prep kids with AP kids who are used to in-depth, fast paced learning is what's in store, I don't see it working out too well.

While reading these blogs, I've noticed that some (not all) have over-generalized the stereotypical CP and AP teenager. I have three of my closest friends who are in nothing but regular courses. They aren't even the slightest bit less intelligent than all of us. They all have a chance to go to a university, and most of the time, are always finishing their work by the due date. To add to this, five of my best friends are in the AmEx courses with me, three of them being brand new to any class higher than college prep. **THEY HAVE ALL SURVIVED AND PASSED THE CLASS WITH FLYING COLORS.** Any bit of skepticism I might have had about their success rate was immediately diminished within the first few weeks of junior year. Also, not all AP kids are brilliant prodigies who have a future filled with curing diseases or solving unsolvable math theories. Each student has an equal opportunity to do well and get an education from a great school district. And that's the only thing that should matter.

This blog might sound extremely contradictory, or maybe even incessantly bitchy, I'm sorry, I'm tired. But it's just as simple as this: All that students should focus on is getting the most out of their time at Foothill, graduating with passing grades, and striving to get a decent post-high school education. It shouldn't matter how they get there, it should only matter **THAT** they get there.

Sandy (Xiao Ying) Liang | [April 12, 2012 9:31 PM](#)

What is the difference between AP students and CP students? To me, there is no difference between the two. Although taking advanced classes, I still see languorous students who are constantly ignorant to what is going on during each lecture. Like the "CP students" (as everyone calls them), these confounded AP students turn in their homework late or never turn in their homework. Like the "CP students" (as everyone calls them), these confounded advance students use ridiculous excuses to extenuate their guilt for not completing assignments on time. Like the "CP students" (as everyone calls them), these confounded advance students did not come to realize the fact that their present attitudes toward school contribute to their "not so good looking" grades on report cards. So, after all, AP students essentially are CP students. Except the fact that AP students, even those mentioned previously, often receive applause for working hard while CP students receive belittling comments for merely taking classes that "require" less thinking-as people viewed. But, does it necessary mean if one student is taking AP classes, he is much more excelled in school than those not in AP? NO! What makes a student excellent are the personality and work ethic of the student, not what classes the student is taking. If the student is simply ornamented with classes and programs comparable to college courses but has no true potential, how is the student advance? In my view, if one is "excellent", one has the potential to make himself shine under any circumstances, even if he is being placed in regular classes. Plus, regular classes require brain work and effort from student too. On these terms, is an exceptional idea to cancel the existing AP system merely to test the real potential of each student; not for the sake of equality. Besides being able to shine among all other students, the student with potential must also be able to show leadership in the classes. By leadership I mean able to lead the class while care about the situation of everyone. If a student is able to maintain his grades while does a fabulous job at leading, then the student is excellent. Is not this similar to the real world? If one is hired

with other trainees, one must be able to show his potential and abilities to lead prior to advancing to higher position that marks his excellence when compare to the other trainees.

I am not saying that we should abolish the AP system because this will indeed result in equality, I am just trying to point out the benefits of not having an AP system.

In China, no schools have AP programs, not because of ideas of communism. All students are being taught the same and given the same opportunities. Despite the equality, there are positions in the class that students can attempt to take to show their potential. But prior to be "hired" by the teacher to any of these positions, the student must show their potential through grades and their leading skills. There are usually 10-15 of these positions offered to students. Once the teacher announces the candidates, those with potential and leading skills, for these positions, other students are able to vote to determine who will be holding these positions. Often, those who got elected are "excellent" and lack the arrogance most AP students have simply due to the title of "AP students". They are often called the "leaders of the future". This committee in the classroom is responsible for planning all events of the class and keeping everyone on the same pace. Although everyone is kept at the same pace, the demonstration of knowledge will be different during the high school entrance exam all students are require to take, hence, that is the time to show excellence in score wise, just like the SAT of the U.S. This system is installed in China because teachers believe that no matter what circumstance an "excellent" student is being situated in, if he has the power, he will succeed. There is no need for ornamental titles.

So, maybe all AP students should not stubbornly believe that they are the "best" and all CP students are inferior to them. Arrogance defeats even the most successful people in history. Use your work to show that you are the best, not titles that do not represent potential. There always exists someone who is better than us, maybe they are in the CP classes, we will never know.

Chandler Vu | [April 12, 2012 9:34 PM](#)

Before you tune out and focus in on your jazz music on your Walkman radios and say "oh lord it's Chandler Vu the communist", just bear with me for a few minutes out of your life. What I have read in a lot of blogs is a consistent slandering of the proposition to integrate both CP and AP; using the word "communist" as a curse word and completely disregarding what possible positive outcomes there may be down the road if desegregation of the classes were made a reality. Why is this communistic learning system so negative? What is benevolent or unjust about helping out the whole instead of the few? Have we become so introverted and selfish to the point where helping our fellow scholastic comrades is out of the question because it puts our own interests at risk? If this is what humanity has become then I would rather be an owl.

(Now I'm pretty confident that I have you, my dear reader, highly confused. You are probably wondering as to whom this character is. Don't be too surprised though because here comes the real me.)

When Mr. Geib first described the prompt to us I heard whispers and hushed tones about how the CP would bring everyone else down and we would become only moderate classes instead of achieving our highest quality of academic excellence. Where the mud and riffraff track their filth and subhuman qualities with them into the glorious palace of Amex like the White House in the age of Jackson. Many people just assumed that the CP students would be a cancer beset upon the higher classes of Foothill society by the gods for the sole purpose of Mr. Geib's pleasure of watching us squirm. On the contrary! I would welcome our newly found brethren as if they were as AP as I were and would thus make adjustments to our new non-AP scenario.

I admit that that previous statement told only half of the truth, for you see I would only welcome them so warmly because I knew what the outcome of the experiment would be. Once the CP students and the AP students become situated and acquainted, the AP students would most likely take control over the meeker CP students and would demand more of a challenge. The AP students would set the curve so high that the lesser CP students would have to struggle thoroughly to stay afloat and in school. This process would weed out the ones who would not be deemed fit as a producer for society and leave only the strongest standing. This process is what I would call "the Stalinist theory of Evolution" where the integrated classes (communism) would leave only the preferred genes or students standing (evolution). This way we would be left with only a master race of students composed of both CP and AP individuals; the needs of the collective would be

met because of the initiative of the individual.

Being the AP student that you, my dear reader, are, you most likely would ask the question "what would happen to these lesser CP students that have been left to the wayside?" And that my friend is the rub. For these students, after being crushed by the onslaught of the AP horde and being either kicked or dropped out of school, would join either one of two classes: the Industrial Betas or the Epsilons.

The Betas would go on to work hard in whatever career they might run into and would provide all of the necessities for the "Alphas" (non-dropouts). They would be viewed as equal citizens to the Alphas in every aspect and would receive equal treatment and respect. The Epsilons on the other hand, would be the druggies, welfare addicts, and all other "non-producers". These beasts would be rounded up by the Beta police force (Gestapo type organization) and placed in...annihilation camps. The primary purpose of these camps is the reeducation (and if need be brainwashing) of the Epsilons into unskilled laborers or "Omegas". This way they are given a second chance before they are faced with the camps' secondary purpose...extermination.

A glorious future of equality awaits us comrades! One without slackers and non-producers! One where all are welcome and content! One of pure productivity. And the first step is merely the integration of our two classes not at just our school, but in every school across our great nation.

Joe Vielbig replied to [comment from Chandler Vu](#) | April 12, 2012 9:46 PM

Oh Chandler, what would we do without you...

Cameron Lee replied to [comment from Chandler Vu](#) | April 13, 2012 12:03 AM

For a second there, I was scared that you were going soft on us and you're little heart of stone grew two sizes this day...

But then you started talking about Alphas and Epsilons, and my fears were relieved.

Sarah Ashley | April 12, 2012 9:38 PM

As hard as I try, I cannot just ignore that getting rid of AP classes will undermine all my hard work. I can't just look at the bigger picture, paying no mind to how it would effect me. No matter how anyone puts it, getting rid of AP and honors classes would really harm the students who have chosen these advanced courses. Everyone is given the chance to be in these classes but only some really want it and pursue it.

I know this could help the college prep kids, but really couldn't they just end up resenting the "know-it-all" that is always raising their hand, acing tests, and never gets below an A? I would. In fact, I often find myself looking at my fellow AMEXers and thinking they are so much smarter than me, they're actually responsible, they never forget their homework, and the list goes on.

That's not the only problem that could arise if college prep and AP students were combined though. That's just the tip of the iceberg. First of all, I just want to make it clear that almost all my friends are college prep. I know that once we were in the same classes they wouldn't mind pestering me for the answers to the homework that they just didn't feel like doing. Maybe they'd say they just want to "look real quick" to see what I did, but we all know what that means.

Look, we are elitist. We get a feeling of superiority just because we are in AP. We do come across as arrogant to some of the other students. But in the end we work our tails off just to get that B+ in history. We have dedicated a lot of our free time to either doing homework, studying for the next physio test, or just worrying about how we did on the SATs or the ACTs. We lose sleep, overdose on caffeine, and spend hours staring at the daunting list of the latest torture methods in our agendas. Don't you think we deserve to be proud?

Natalie Waechter | April 12, 2012 9:44 PM

Last year in Mr. Dinkler's first period Honors English class, a student (whom shall remain nameless) spoke to the class after the topic of Lord of the Flies came up. This student remarked, "Mr. Dinkler I have not read that book because I was in Honors English last year, not College Prep!" (Just imagine it all snobby and rude.) This statement sent me back for a second. I was thinking, "Did that student really just make fun of those who did not take Honors English freshman year?" At first I was mad at this remark but then I let it go up until I had to write this blog.

As a student who started on the so-called "lower" track (according to some students) I successfully joined a more advanced class schedule. It was an adjustment, but I still had a heart to learn. I still wanted to become a better student, I still wanted to go to college, and I still wanted to do everything academically that I could. I wasn't an unmotivated College Prep student that stared at blank pieces of paper and I sure had greater plans in life than to become a "druggie".

As AP students we generalize the public. We look down on people more than look up, because we want to make ourselves feel more superior, but in reality we should be on the same level as all the other juniors at Foothill. We all are students and practically learning the same thing, we are just on separate curriculums. Our classes strive towards that AP tests in May, while College Prep reaches to teach the state standards. We are both learning, but in different ways.

If the AP and Honors programs were to end here at Foothill it would be an interesting situation. I personally think that the already unmotivated students (which does not include all of the College Prep students) will be unmotivated even more because they see other working hard and they think, "Why should I do anything, they are already better than me." It may bring a few conflicts between those who look down on others, but at the same time it will allow those who did not take AP a chance to work with those students. AP and CP may not be the same thing but we are still all people who are learning and have some goal that they dream of achieving.

Karl Zablocki | [April 12, 2012 9:45 PM](#)

I definitely felt out of place last year in Mrs. Houlahan's Honors History class. I literally got 96% or better on just about every test and got 100% on the finals as well as the CST's. I know that not everybody else in the class knew as much as I did (I've been studying history just about my whole life), but it's not like their lack of knowledge rubbed off on me (not to say that the entire class was dumb... rather that the knowledge was concentrated within an unusually limited number of students). If anything, I bet one little thing I said helped someone during a test. I never felt held back or restrained because of the fact that many of my peers were listening to the first time about what Mrs. Houlahan was teaching. I certainly didn't (and still don't) think my cohorts in Houlahan's were below me, but if you looked at the scores you'd probably say that I had an edge over them. Since a healthy number of you were in my class, we all should take the beam out of our own eyes before complaining about the speck of sawdust in the eyes of the college prep kids before attempting to judge this hypothetical.

In a perfect world, there wouldn't have to be an AP class. Of course, as with any idealistic notion, the world isn't perfect. Any tool can be in AP, as it's not exactly an exclusive club. You guys get all high and mighty when you protest against the integration of AP and college prep, but I know plenty of college prep kids who are far more deserving of being considered the "elite" of Foothill. I know a few of the kids in college prep chose to be there because they preferred to take AP Math or Physics above the perceived "extraneous" AP History and English classes. I don't necessarily agree with this, but I see where they're coming from. In our American society, the engineer types are far more coveted in the labor pool than the abstract thinkers (myself included) and if you can excel in the "mathy" subjects, you'll be a commodity in the workplace. If you can guarantee A's in a normal class over B's in a weighted AP class while managing an A in AP Physics, you're in luck.

Before you accuse me of wanting to incorporate AP and college prep know that I don't support that stance; rather I only am being open-minded and seeing the nuances of the system. It wouldn't come close to working until you separate the kids who want to succeed in school from those who don't really care about school. Until that happens, there MUST be a higher level within the educational system to cater to the better sorts of students. This also applies to the lower income, minority school districts that struggle. Neither race nor income is itself the problem, since we've taken care of civil rights legislation and such. The problem is that they're in a ditch that whites (or white-ified people) refuse to help out of because they've "done enough already", despite the fact that they have only made theoretical strides and sparse practical ones.

It somewhat goes back to the Booker T. Washington vs. W.E.B. DuBois debate over the idea of gradual assimilation versus immediate assimilation. You either allow the "better" ones to be held down and try to earn some respect by grinding it out with the 90% (Washington), or you magically let the top 10% do whatever they want but have no realistic solution for the bottom 90% (DuBois). The former sounds a lot more

communistic, yet it was the preferred system for the majority of African-Americans between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement. Like the times of the sharecroppers, only a lunatic would believe that our current educational system is fair. We see that minority communities have the worst schools, the worst people, and the worst aura. Every couple of weeks I see another inner city teacher in the news, busted for drug issues or for some disgusting child pornography charges. I'm usually one of the first people to wonder whether people can't try a little harder or not, but I can see that it's not relevant to this situation. American life for lower income students isn't as easy to get past as most people want to believe (especially the white people who complain about having scholarships for minorities or poorer folk). When all you see around you are crumbling concrete jungles, your teacher's meth addiction, and the general indifference of the world around you, it's hard not to say "Fuck school, I'll sell crack". If you want to be anything, you move the hell out of there. Somehow you've got to change that mentality. But for this 16 year old kid, it's hard to find answers for questions that people haven't solved for generations. The issue is whether we can find a sustainable way to reform the educational system to really make America the best it really can be. Bringing down the top seems to only handicap progress, while leaving out the bottom has a similar effect. The bottom line: I would object to the abolishing of AP or Foothill, but we really do need to remember that we're not the only people in the world. As Mr. Cohen says so eloquently during announcements, "Help yourself by helping others".

Karl Zablocki replied to [comment from Karl Zablocki | April 12, 2012 10:42 PM](#)

When I say that minority communities have worse people, I mean like the drug dealers and such. I grew up most of my life near minority communities, and I know that some of the best people I've known were from these places. You see a higher percentage of "bad" people from lower income surroundings however...

Jared Kelly | [April 12, 2012 10:05 PM](#)

If life has taught me one thing, it is that intelligence and work ethic in no way relate to each other. My IQ may be 137, 8 points away from genius, but I spend far more time thinking than doing. For example, I have spent the past hour writing, erasing, writing, erasing, writing, erasing, writing, erasing, and finally writing, these first three sentences. It seems that I can only write blogs effectively if it's after midnight, and I'm angry. That way my cynical rants are able to keep me going (see hormones blog). Unfortunately, I usually go off on random tangents and can't hold anything that even scarcely resembles an argument (see this blog).

Quite frankly, I often think that I don't deserve to be in AMEX, and therefore have a far more accepting view of the college prep course.

Face it. There's no denying that AP classes are far superior in curriculum. Sadly, this fact has led to some faulty logic in the differentiation between AP and CP. Here is a basic outline:

1. AP is more work.
2. Harder work takes superior intelligence.
Therefore...
3. All kids in AP are more intelligent.
4. And if all the smart kids are in AP...
5. Everyone else must be in CP.
Therefore...
6. CP students are less intelligent.

.....Faulty logic makes me sad. I highlight this fact with the proceeding frowny face ? :(

One of the depressing truths of society is that it only takes a few people to screw up a good thing for the rest of us. You know the types... Mr. "I already know everything I need to live, why I am I even here", Mr.. "F*ck math, I have weed", and Mrs. "I don't need to learn _____, to be a _____, and I have some texts to catch up on anyway". It's those (I hesitate to say) "people" that give college prep the bad rep. Why do we force these people to be at school and ruin it for the rest of us? Do we really need diversity like that? Think about a college prep environment where everyone gives a shit... It would be a beautiful thing. How about we just kill off all the gang members, druggies with no future, and the future criminals, murderers, and rapists?

Oh, wait. We need someone to work at McDonalds.

AN: Cynicism's back.

Karl Zablocki replied to [comment from Jared Kelly](#) | [April 12, 2012 10:13 PM](#)

This is the blog I wanted to write.

Kent McLay | [April 12, 2012 10:06 PM](#)

College Prep merging with Advanced Placement? The very thought is ridiculous, and somewhat laughable. Not because CP kids are stupid, not because they are all addicted to drugs, and certainly not because they are unable to pass AP. One of the few reasons that this merger would meet catastrophe and no success is simple. The kids that are in AP are here because they want to be, we have sweated through countless chapter packets and surprise essays, read long hours into the night with Mr. Bailey, and quite simply worked our asses off to reach this point in this difficult course. My best friends and most of the people I hangout with are in all CP courses, they are not stupid, nor do they have a problem with drugs quite simply they are unwilling to put in the extra effort for subjects they truly don't care about.

Now before everyone gets all offended and says I am making a huge generalization allow me to explain my statement. First off as there are for any rule there are exceptions like Emilia for whom the work or extra effort would not be a problem, but they have valid reasons for not taking that course. Now back to my point, I attended Ventura Highschool freshmen year and was a college prep kid for two days before I begged my counselor to bump me into honors. During those two days I watched a kid get high in the back of my English class was unable to hear more then one of every ten words my teacher said due to the volume of the kids headphones next to me, and watched another kid flip through every page of his English book adding his version of art to every page. This may seem fantastic but I swear on my honor that every word of it is true. Granted Ventura and Foothill are not very close together when ranked in academics, Ventura being somewhere near the bottom of that list.

My friends even close to the kids that are described above, they are all respectful and have never tried drugs, but all of them have told me at one point or another that they are smart enough to do AP, but they just don't think its worth it. I know that all of my friends could pass AP if they so desired, they just do not have the want or need to take and pass Amex. This does not mean that they will end up working in Carls Junior handing out delayed diabetes on a tray, in fact I am almost positive one of my friends is going to become a rocket scientist. He can easily kick my ass when it comes to math as he is taking AP Calc next year, a class I have absolutely no desire for nor the facilities to pass.

Quite simply to each his own, if you want to remain unchallenged in some CP courses and take AP classes that interest you, or just stick with CP entirely then that is your decision, but taking away the classes that give students the ability to advance themselves could do no one any good. Nor should CP kids complain that the AP kids get more glory, after all those that work harder usually get more recognition

Sara Jane Patterson | [April 12, 2012 10:14 PM](#)

I didn't sign up for AP classes because I'm very intelligent. And I certainly didn't sign up for AP classes because I have a haughty superiority complex. No, I asked for these (at the time what were overwhelmingly intimidating) advanced placement courses because I felt an obligation to do so. An obligation to my parents, yes, but maybe secretly even more of an obligation to myself. I would regret not at least trying. I knew the experience would be more challenging and probably greater appreciated by colleges, and I knew that despite my unfortunate and seemingly never ending habits of procrastination, laziness, and unhealthy amounts of stress, that these classes had something extraordinary to offer me that would benefit me in the long run.

Now I have almost made it to the end of my junior year, and I can say that these higher level courses have been wonderfulemotionaldistressingexcitinginterestingbeneficialdemanding...worth it. I look back at this year and can proudly say that I have made it this far, when before, I struggled to believe I even could. Writing this makes me tear up, because I can remember crying in panic over summer, because I thought I wasn't smart enough, organized enough, efficient enough, or good enough to be successful in these classes. But I am here; I made it. And through it, I found that to apply for these classes, you don't have to be a perfect genius who is always annoyingly right and precisely organized. It's

just about being interested in the highest possible education and willing to be challenged while enduring continuous pressure, which is something I respect. But I also respect the choice to not be in these classes. The more important thing is that there IS a choice.

We chose this, and they chose that. For a reason. Why should we all be treated as if we want the same thing, when we don't? The truth is that we don't want the same classes. Taking away the privilege to choose would deprive students of being able to have the learning experience they prefer, while creating situations that raise the issues of what the appropriate pace of the class should be and equal attention given to each student.

It bothers me that having higher classes available to students is being considered a problem. How can you say it's unfair when we choose our classes? There is no academic injustice; the only real issue is the ignorant, offensive generalizations made by extremists on both sides. That should be the focus of concern, not whether or not having advanced courses is educationally unfair. If everyone would accept that not all Honors and AP kids are bitchy, prudish, boring snobs and that not all CP kids are lazy, unmotivated, disruptive slackers, then the school social scene would be more mature and accepting. Until then, I'm going to continue with my wonderfully nerdy classes and hope that I'll be judged by my character and not the capital letters in front of my school subjects.

Lee Baker | [April 12, 2012 10:15 PM](#)

I've always been the CP student. All through elementary school, I was never involved in GATE or any other special acronym. Middle school it was the same story. I wasn't entered in any advanced classes. I took all regular classes;

just doing what I needed to get out of the hell hole they call middle school. But if you know me even in the slightest, you'd know that I'm not drug addicted or a gang member or a on parole. I still tried my hardest throughout elementary and middle school. For the majority of the time, I got through middle school with a 4.0 which I guess much to brag about though.

It wasn't until sophomore year that I took my first advanced course. It was Honors Chemistry...and it was horrible. But I'm not here to rant and rave about how many times I failed a test in that class. I honestly lost count of that anyways. But what I noticed by taking that class was much more profound. Still keeping my tough CP rigor (haha), I was also in Mrs. Houlahan's 3rd and 4th period English and World History classes. I would go from a class that had students that were so involved and so interested, as I sat in the back listening to Mr. Weldele, who might as well have been teaching in Chinese to a class where I felt that a handful of the students would rather be smoking hard drugs-and that's not an understatement. There was a significant amount of kids that just didn't care and that was evident. However, just to set the generalization straight, most of the students in CP are great kids who care about their grades just as much as you. So don't be so quick to judge. Anyways, I made the jump. Junior year, I decided, would be the year that I leaped from CP to AP, which I was already getting a taste of in Honors Chemistry.

But I think the attempt to remove AP and Honors from FTHS would be futile. I know the attitude from the kids in CP who don't care. They aren't suddenly going to get higher grades and test scores just because you rid Foothill of advanced classes. Yeah, it would be great for the kids who really should be in AP, but aren't however the effect of it wouldn't exactly go over too well with advanced level students. I know, for at least me, I would be pissed if I worked as hard as I did last year in Honors Chem or as hard as I have this year in Amex or Physiology, just for that to be omitted from the curriculum at Foothill, especially in my senior year. We put the check next to AP, what right do they have to erase that?

Peter Thomson | [April 12, 2012 10:27 PM](#)

The way our school system works right now sucks. Currently, we've got the AP classes and the College Prep classes, where the stereotype could be that that AP kids are really smart and will be successful later in life, while the latter will all be plumbers. I know that's not true, there are plenty of kids in AP who aren't the shiniest spoons in the cabinet, and there are plenty of college prep kids who aren't challenged by the class. But nobody can have an education individually tailored to them, unless we each have our own little school and our own personal faculty who will teach us however our learning style depicts and we can't put everyone in the same class and expect them to all get a perfect education. But that's just the way it goes. You can't expect everyone to handle an AP class, and you can't

expect everyone to excel to the best of their abilities in a college Prep class. Because nobody learns the same way as everyone else. Some kids can take in a lot of information in a short amount of time, while others need to spend much more time to learn them same thing. Some people just can't handle the course load of AP. So I just don't see a problem with having different AP and College prep classes. I know that when I am in a class that isn't Honors or AP it is extremely boring and leaves me wishing that I could be in a class with a more rigorous curriculum along with other students who feel the same way. That's just because that is the way I learn. I know that there are plenty of kids who have trouble with regular trig/pre-calc, while I have a relatively easy time in the honors class. And I know that I am in that classroom with other kids who want to learn this stuff to the best of their abilities, instead of in a class where people aren't paying attention, are sleeping, or just can't understand it and don't care. (I know that not every College Prep kid is like that, but I digress.) Frankly, we can't all have equal educations because we aren't all the same. We can't force educational equality on kids because the faster learning ones will be dragged down to where the teacher teaches the whole class at the learning rate of the kids who can least understand it. It just can't be that way. There has to be educational opportunity. Multiple choices multiple learning abilities, and at least the option between AP and CP, which is good enough.

But I know that doing something like that segregates the kids, and makes CP kids feel like the AP kids are held at a higher standard than them. But nobody forced them to take College Prep, and nothing is keeping them from taking AP but their own individual desires. I mean, if you have trouble with College Prep English, then you shouldn't take AP. Does not taking AP give you a worse education? Most likely. But should your different learning style force everyone else to leave AP and sacrifice a good GPA so that you can feel equal? There are social classes for a reason. If everyone was extremely smart, what would get done? Who would make the food, or construct the buildings, or clean the toilet? Who would drive the steam roller to make the roads, or drive the trash truck? Those jobs are essential to any civilization, but nobody who knows how to build space shuttles or do quantum mechanics is going to want to do those jobs. There is a need for people who don't know how to do that in order for a society to thrive. And on the contrary, if nobody knew how to do simple algebra or write a persuasive essay, we would have to revert back to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle where those skills weren't needed. But humanity has come too far from that to just go back, in order to make some people feel good about themselves. Social stratification is necessary for the development and progression of civilization. It is natural order. Nobody wants to be "lower-class", but the truth is that they are as important as the guy who invented the wheel, the cart, the compass, the light bulb, the skyscraper, and so on. Yeah, we might be segregated in school, there may not be "equality" in the education system. But without that difference, without the separation of AP and College Prep, we'd still be spearing mammoths and hiding in our caves from sabre tooth tigers.

Jenny Veyna | [April 12, 2012 10:35 PM](#)

Everyone chooses their own path to follow. No one forces us to take the hard classes, and beat ourselves up day and night trying to balance out all the AP and honors classes we decide to take. It's the path we all individually stepped onto. We all knew the nights of studying it would take, and the cram sessions that would make our brain feel fried right after we got a whole half lifetime of history thrown to us right before our eyes. People are making this a much bigger deal than it really is. We don't ALL think that CP kids are dumb or druggies, just like how we know that some students in AP are barely surviving by the grip of their fingernails trying to surpass all the DBQ's and multiple multiple questions. During my freshman year, I didn't take any honors classes, and yes it was a easier than the honors and AP classes I've taken so far, but I still don't look down upon the CP. Every school has those kids that don't try, that could care less about what the teacher has to teach, and would much rather spend their day sleeping at home than having to sit for a whole hour and a half in a classroom, but that doesn't mean that all CP students are like that.

Personally, I wouldn't agree with eradicating the AP classes, simply because it wouldn't be fair to those who want to achieve farther than basic standards. It just wouldn't work out, there is a thick line between students who care about their future and those who just go to school because their parents force them to. Not every college prep kid takes school serious so let's not try to sugar coat them by making them sound like they deserve the throne.

I understand that some AP kids act in snobby ways thinking they are much more superior

than the CP students, but that's normal. Let them act like that. They deserve it don't they? I mean they are managing to survive AP, and let's be honest, it isn't easy. But I also understand how certain students who take CP have their reasons and that's fine, no one is discriminating against that, and I respect that by all means, but there will always be people in life who act as if they own the world. Get use to it. Its life. It's going to happen sometime in your life as well.

Christina Di Bernardo | [April 12, 2012 10:36 PM](#)

To me, the whole idea of eliminating AP and Honors classes for the sake of equality reminds me of that short film my English class viewed last year, where everyone was inhibited in some way if they were better at some things than other people; for example, the main character was dragged down by weights placed upon him because he was too strong. Why shouldn't we be able to play to our strengths and abilities? Some of us like to challenge ourselves with AP classes, and some like to challenge themselves in other ways. Everyone learns differently and has different interests. You can't standardize variety; there need to be options open for people or else we'd all end up identical to one another. "Tracking,' indeed, is undemocratic and un-American." Tracking allows diversity, does not confine everything to a standard, and diversity is a huge part of being an American. As for "undemocratic," when has being free to choose your own life been deemed "undemocratic?"

I think that education is strictly an individual pursuit. I don't know why I think that, it just seems to me that learning is your business and that you shouldn't pawn it off on someone else or accept working for someone else. There's nothing wrong with "looking after one's neighbor," but too much help and supervision might as well be doing it for them. I do, however, think that school should also be about learning how to work with others. If we stay at home all day, where else are we going to learn where our personalities fit in most or how to cooperate with people you may not see eye to eye with or how to solve real-life problems? I may not like group projects but I've learned how to schedule and how to work with multiple people to get the desired outcome. "Why don't we get rid of AP classes and academic tracking?" Because we need to be able to challenge ourselves in some way, and even if we're not taking an AP class, that doesn't mean we aren't challenging ourselves in some other area.

"To what extent should we as a community minimize the FREEDOM of high achieving students to choose advanced classes in the name of equality of all students?" To no extent should we limit people's choices. It may have been funny once to say that you could have a Model T in any color, as long as that color was black, but we branched out to new cars and new colors. Conformity is boring. Diversity is fun; diversity is choice; diversity is freedom.

Sydney Gustafson | [April 12, 2012 10:46 PM](#)

Ninth grade health and geography, ohh good times. I didn't have the luck of making the Foothill lotto, so I got stuck at VHS not knowing anyone. I was greeted in my second period by a class of homies, and I kid you not, this is no exaggeration. The kids in my class freaked me out. I sat in my desk on the first day and intently stared at my hands while my stomach churned. My teacher noticed and picked on me for it, saying "Hey what's up with you? You look a bit uncomfortable," in front of the rest of my class. Everyone giggled. The kids in my class were horrible. HORRIBLE! There was girl who came to class no more than 10 times the entire semester. I remember specifically that she came on the day we saw pictures of STD's and my teacher said, "Welcome to class, you picked a good day to come." She got 3% in the class. FAIL! There was another boy who would scream crude words while the teacher talked. There was actually a chick fight right in class once. I was so miserable, that I asked my teacher if I could study independently in the library so I didn't have to deal with the riffraff. I would have learned more on my own anyways. We had a lot of group projects second semester, the geography semester, and my teacher would insist that we made "heterogeneous" groups, but he would say it in a creepy accent with his creepy beard and creepy chest hair. What he meant by heterogeneous groups was that he wanted me and the two intelligent guys in my class to stop working together, because we dominated. He got really upset because we refused to make "heterogeneous groups." Could you blame us? We three "honors kids" in a cp class clung together. We needed each other for the sake of our mental wellbeing. We needed each other for the sake of our grades. Nobody did their work with exception of the three of us, and I knew that in any group project where I worked with others, I would be stuck

with hours of responsibility because of the lack of motivation in my classmates. I live a pretty sheltered life. I live in a little cul-de-sac with about eight neighbors. Out of the eight neighbors I believe five are doctors and one is a lawyer. My mom is Hispanic and that is really the only bit of diversity up there in my little cul-de-sac of old people. My parents have always made sure that my education is a priority. Neither of them is working three jobs. They come home at five or six every day and watch the news and say "girls did you do your homework?" When I was struggling with math in elementary school, my dad helped me. I have always had a pep squad on my side. My mom, on the other hand, claims that she never did too well in school. Her mom was a single mother of four struggling to make ends meet. She didn't have the support from her family that I have from her and my dad. It is unfair, but often family life dominates a child's education. But does that mean that I should be held back? OF COURSE NOT!! This is not a Marxist society where we sacrifice the good of (in this case) AP for the wellbeing of CP. College Prep would most likely not even want AP. Last year in math, I set the curve for 4 or 5 math tests in a row. Needless to say, many of the "college prep students" would roll their eyes at me. College prep students are not morally inferior to me and are in no means bad people. I am an "AP kid" and yes, I do like to impress adults by telling them about my four AP/honors classes, but I am not a better citizen than a person who takes CP. I admit I am not a better person than any CP kid, but I do have to say that I feel intellectually superior to them. I just do, and I am sure all of you AP kids do also. It is wrong, but it is how I feel. Do you remember the teacher (Mr. Reich) that I talked about above? At the end of freshmen year, when he got particularly frustrated at me for this or that reason, he said to me "Sydney, you act as if you are so much better than all the kids in this class, but you're not. You're not as great as you think you are." I am snob, and I can admit it, and I have had a CP teacher tell me so to my face. CP and AP don't mix well in school and it continues that way throughout life. People live in neighborhoods with people that are similar to them. The doctors live in neighborhoods filled with doctors and lawyers and engineers, and the strawberry pickers live in neighborhoods with those similar to them. We do not live in a "heterogeneous" society, and there is no point in trying to force us to in high school.

Martin Marquez | [April 12, 2012 10:48 PM](#)

Kids are in AP because they want to be in AP. If taken out of it and combined with all the others, this won't help the "lower ones" (as most call them) as much as people think it will. Most people I know in the CP choose to be in it because they want to. They would rather go to simple VC, or do other stuff instead. As for the AP students they would of course be mad at this situation. No AP means no more good college to go to. Most of the AP kids would love to go to a amazing university, but due to this tragedy, it would be ruined! Foothill wouldn't be the same! People would rather go to Buena, Ventura or Bonaventure. Nothing would go back to normal. I don't like the idea very much. Kids wanting to push would not go anywhere and the others wanting to go at a regular pace would want a challenge. It's as simple as that. Nothing more, nothing less.

Emily Turnage | [April 12, 2012 11:05 PM](#)

I don't want to integrate AP and CP classes. I think that that would be a ridiculous idea, and I think integrating them either way (AP kids into CP classes and CP kids into AP classes) would be a complete disaster. That being said, I know exactly what it's like to be in College Prep. I came to Foothill in 10th grade – before that, I went to a private school called Villanova Preparatory School in Ojai. The class before mine, I had been told, had not been the most academically gifted group of people, so in order to accommodate, they had removed all Honors classes and we would be forced to take College Prep. This was initially a wonderful thing in my eyes; a year of taking it easy, not worrying about homework and being able to relax in school? Awesome! I soon found out, however, that that was not the case. To put it simply, I was really, really bored. I have been informed by the state and by my parents that I am of above average intelligence, and being put into a college prep class was probably the worst thing for my interest in academics, completely killing any sort of fondness I ever had for school. Coming to Foothill in tenth grade, however, was the exact opposite – being in Honors English and History made me realize exactly how much I had been missing in advanced-level courses. For me, Honors and AP classes are what keep me interested and happy in school. I'm not happy if I don't have a class or two where my intellect is really challenged. That's why when it comes to the integration of AP and College Prep classes, I

suggest that we focus on the individual rather than the whole.

It seems like a lot of people who have posted so far seem to believe that the College Prep classes are full of slackers and "druggies", to quote an earlier blog. I'd like to dispel that rumor. All of my friends are in college prep courses, and they are genuinely challenged by those courses – they're happy in them, because they can do well while trying hard. They are not inferior to us because they are taking a different, less rigorous course – the point is that they try their hardest, as do we. They deserve to be respected for their efforts.

Camden Mhaoney | [April 12, 2012 11:10 PM](#)

To be completely honest, my first reaction after hearing this would be "oh god, I'm going to be in a class full of idiots, and people who don't pay attention, the only thing worse would be going to Ventura High". I remember my classes before honors and AP, most memorably in middle school. I remember being in classes where the teacher couldn't be heard the entire time, because the kids just didn't care, and talked over the instructor. It would make me feel like I was being sent back a few grades, in AP I feel like I'm in an environment of mature students who actually want to learn something, or at least pretend like they do out of respect for other students. The truth is that while the tracking system may seem like it is separating smart kids, and others, it also makes it so that the kids who truly do not care, are not holding back those who really want to learn.

The truth is, most people in CP are not stupid, and are not delinquents. But there's just a certain air of professionalism in the AP and Honors classes, that simply does not exist in the CP classes, and basically all the advanced classes are doing is setting aside a class for students who are serious about their work, and are not just there because they have to be. And I don't think this is really limiting equality in any way, it is simply providing an opportunity for all those who choose to pursue it. Is it right to make those students who actually care about their education to be held back by those who don't give a damn, all for an overly liberal interpretation of the word equality? I don't think so, I'm all for equality, and I'm no social Darwinist, but I'm not going to lie to myself, and pretend like everybody is born with the same aptitude for academics. The simple fact is, some people are smarter than others, and we cannot impair the more gifted, to make the less gifted feel better. Saying that the track system is unfair makes about as much sense as saying that grades (as in freshman, sophomore, etc.) are unfair, people in higher grades receive different education because they are working with more than those in lower grades, and the same is true for those in AP as opposed to CP. They simply have more to work with.

I don't think the system is really pissing anyone off anyway. I have a lot of friends in college prep, and they all pretty much want to be there, and they don't resent the people in AP either. Most people in CP are there because they chose to, either because that's what they're comfortable with, or they simply don't really care about school. It's not really an issue about which class warfare is about to erupt, people don't really mind that there isn't equality in this area, because it's not discrimination based on class, race, or orientation, it's simply an evaluation of academic achievement, and people are basically in the class that they choose to be in.

Wesley Harris | [April 12, 2012 11:13 PM](#)

There should always be an equal balance of College Prep classes to AP classes. Any student can take what course they choose, and should not be deemed a slacker or a nerd by whatever path he/she takes. It is important to have diversity and it doesn't matter which boat you happen to sail on. Some people want to float down the current of the Atlantic Trade Route, while others are determined to fight their way up wind to their goal.

If someone wants to get more substance out of their High School classes they will work and hopefully get a satisfactory grade. After obtaining the grade the feeling of getting good grade in an AP class might not be fulfilling enough hence goating/bragging /cockiness. That's where the AP kids get their bad name. A few people start to give the AP kids a bad image and then each side, the CP and the AP kids are at each others throats.

It would be a terrible idea to make students only take CP classes or AP classes. The classes the students are currently in are the classes where they want to be (or even have to be). If there were only CP classes, the AP students would start to slack off because the workload would be too easy and they wouldn't be getting the harder courses that suit them. While on the other hand, if there were only AP classes, many suits would fall behind (i.e. the CP kids) because of the workload. I think that the education system is fine

the way it is and should not be tampered with.

Sam Champagne | [April 12, 2012 11:16 PM](#)

I have always been in the more "advanced" classes. I was in GATE in elementary and middle school and have taken honors and AP classes in high school whenever I can. The reason I take these classes isn't because I want to rub the higher classes in my peers' faces; I hate it when people do that. I don't say AP US History or Honors Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus or AP English or Honors Physiology. I call those classes history, math, English, and physiology. Those added words and syllables only bring added condescension and haughtiness. The titles of my classes aren't the reason I take them. The reason I'm in these classes is because of the challenge. In order to remain interested and focused, I take the classes that push me closer to my limit. I like the challenge that these classes bring. These classes have always been my favorites because of their difficulty. If they were to be eliminated, I would be pretty sad. Not because all of my hard work would be wasted (I still learned that material. It's not like now it would be gone forever) and I wouldn't be able to brag to drug users about how swell I am, but rather because no longer would I get to learn in depth about history or math or science or English. I would feel like I was missing out on important information that I could learn in AP but not college prep classes. I would feel as if I was missing something. I would be missing the challenge and the in depth knowledge of the subject that AP and honors bring. Even though I have spent most of my time in non-college prep classes, I don't have the delusion of college prep students that some AP students have. I wouldn't be afraid of these students. I don't believe that college prep students as a whole have a certain apathy towards school or are procrastinators. I know that there are college prep students that try very hard in their classes and their grades are just as well earned as many AP students' remarkable grades. I also know that many AP students did minimal work in our classes and were rewarded. If the classes were mixed, there would be college prep students with better grades than those of their former AP student counterparts, there would be ex-AP students that cheat more than college prep students, there would be former AP students that would use more intense drugs with more frequency than college prep students. My main problem with eliminating AP wouldn't be sharing a classroom with supposed second class citizens. The main issue would be the reduced academic rigor. I would be thirsty for the challenge I'm used to.

Samantha Beatty | [April 12, 2012 11:18 PM](#)

I'd like to first point out that life is not about equality and it never will be. I would also like to say that I don't think it should be in some instances; and education is one of them. Now I do believe that everyone should have opportunity to get into those hard classes or that prestigious college, but that doesn't mean that everyone belong there. This issue is like a two way street, it goes both ways. Not everyone belongs in CP classes; that is why they made AP.

Now it is true that we may be able to help those in CP more if we were to join in there classes, but have you ever thought of the fact that they might not want us in their classes? Or that it is the teacher's job to teach them not ours? Or that some of them don't even want help? Now I'm not trying to be vain in any way but it is true that most of us are smarter and more advanced than those in CP (hence the word ADVANCED in AP). I myself would not want to be in a class with people smarter than myself. Yes it is good that they can help you when needed but I also don't like feeling stupid when the more advanced kids are doing those physics problems like it's nothing and I am sitting there confused.

Then there are those in CP that are smart enough for AP they just don't want to put forth the effort to take that extra hard class. I highly doubt they would appreciate us overtaking there class (they probably take those lower classes to get away from us). Mr. Geib said that we would be transfered into those classes mainly to help the students that are having trouble in these subjects, but do we even know for sure if it would help them. Personally if I was that person in the CP class feeling like an idiot i would stop trying at all.

They started AP classes for a reason, and this set-up has been working so far, so why fix what isn't broken?

Holly Tokar | [April 12, 2012 11:18 PM](#)

Abolishing AP classes is an extremely bad idea. It would be like taking away the advanced training of 20, 13 year old NFL football prodigies and throwing them cold into "Packers-

esque" programs. Obviously this is a bad example but my point is that those boys, who had the potential and drive to achieve greatly in football, would have their opportunity stripped from them. Packers would still offer them coaching, but they would be surrounded by average to below average kids for the most part, who are forced to be there. The boys' full potential would not be reached, as disengaged recreational players would overtake the coaches' attention and therefore their ability to advance in the sport. (By the way I don't mean to bag on Packers, for I really know nothing about the program. This is just my naive vision of it.) Taking away AP classes would make AP kids unhappy, just as the prodigies would be unhappy in my football example.

AP is a place for the students who want to challenge themselves in school to gain more knowledge and to experience college-like courses. If AP was taken away and all AP students were integrated into one giant college prep system, they would not get the same opportunity. Having personally been in some college prep classes, I know that the teachers have to slow down the curriculum so that the majority of the students can keep up. The pace is miserably slow, and I was miserable in the classes. This was mostly because the kids who were slowing down the class either hated school or were trying but really needed to get a private tutor to help them. It wasn't fair to the advanced students who were bored and truly wanted to learn.

When people say that AP has an air of elitism about it, they are right. I'm sickened by how snobby AP kids can be in talking about their "God gifted intelligence". I'd say a good 30% of AP kids need a reality check. Yes, school may come easier for you. Yes, you study hard so that you get a 2300 on the SAT. Yes, you have a 4.(whatever), but does that give you the right to outwardly act elitist to other students? No. Be humble.

What people forget is that being in AP is a choice. Anyone can be in it if they desire to and have met basic grade requirements. It's in the GATE system in elementary school where kids are handpicked as "exceptional", not the AP system. The AP system should not be regarded as upsetting equality in schools. AP is a choice. Each student has an equal chance to be in it if they desire.

I believe AP should never be abolished, but it should never be pedestaled. I believe AP and CP courses should be treated as equally important by a school. Mostly, I believe that AP students need to stop being arrogant and CP students need to stop complaining (I do recognize this is not the case for all), because in the end it is each students' individual choice to be in the classes they're in. Everyone is different.

Ryan Harris | [April 12, 2012 11:21 PM](#)

The concept of having academic equality is absolutely preposterous. Students will always attempt to challenge themselves more than others and will need higher level classes. Slow learners and fast learners will only clash while in the same class, and separate easier and challenging classes are required. Some students wish to fly by high school with a minimal challenge while some want to make an effort to become the best student they can, and achieve the highest grade possible.

When the question was brought up that the district would combine AP and CP classes I could see that this would create a rant throughout blog posts. Personally, I am completely against this concept because this is a form of communism. Education communism. I will not be able to stand being with students who are only at school, because they just have to be there. I like a fast paced class that gets something done, I do not want to have to be in a slow paced class requires you to make a cover page for an assignment. When I am in an AP class I feel that everyone around me working hard to get into a college so they may pursue a career. With classes that combine both CP and AP I would feel less compelled to do try as hard, because my peers around me will do the same.

To answer this blog we should never even consider such a thing as abolishing AP classes and create a single class between two different subjects with difficulties of a high and low level. Academic equality will only slow everyone down and not show the greatness in others.

Bethany Fankhauser | [April 12, 2012 11:39 PM](#)

I don't take AP for the grade boost, the superiority, or because my parents force me to. Voluntarily, I am in APUSH, AP Art, and Honors Physiology because I like the environment. There is a different vibe in AP and Honors classes; the students want to learn. That being said, I am positive that there are students in college prep classes that want to learn, but still, I think that there is something unique about not just the

individuals in AP but the group as a whole. We may be lazy at times but in the big picture of things, we have grasped the importance of learning about new things and gaining an understanding on history and the world.

I have slipped by the first three years of high school with a 3.7 every single quarter. I don't plan on going to a 4 year university right away. My parents want me to have good grades but they don't force me to take AP classes. Yet, ever since 6th grade I have been enrolled in either a GATE, Honors, or AP course. I have grown to like to the teacher in these classes and the students who I am surrounded by today are some of the kids that I have learned alongside with since 6th grade.

Integrating the college and AP classes would not be the end of the world. I think that sometimes we forget how spoiled we are for the education we have (especially at Foothill.) However, to continue to progress in academic achievements, there must be harder classes for the kids who are at school to learn.

I really don't see college prep kids as inferior and I think it is absurd that some people do.

Amelia Gomez | [April 12, 2012 11:41 PM](#)

Nothing I've ever encountered in life has ever been fair. Like ever. Not even in kindergarten when we all got our own packs of crayons; someone always got the one with the extra blues and greens. Not in the 3rd grade, during awards assemblies for academic improvement and dedication. Not in middle school, with a Six Flags trip for all who managed to maintain a 3.5 gpa. And not in high school, where students are segregated into AP and CP. Yanno why they weren't fair? Because those kids who got the extra blue and green crayons, and the plaques in assemblies, and a seat on a sticky 45 minute bus ride to an even stickier amusement park, and a 4.5 GPA, all went for it.

Sure it may be a matter of circumstance for some people; quite frankly, if you were able to overcome diversity and rise up out of the ghetto in which you were born to become some colossal figure in to business world, make sure to look out for the happy movie montage somewhere between you starting community college and being scouted out by a professional so-and-so, because honestly, your life sounds like the next summer block buster, coming to a theatre near you. It's unrealistic to think that it'll all go swimmingly for everyone.

You can't force anyone to take AP, so you shouldn't be able to force anyone to take CP, although, during those late nights studying for multiple multiples on a Physiology test, a lower level class would be welcomed with open arms. And this whole "equality" bit? Thinking that having such a wide spectrum of intellectual power would inevitably push a classroom to equilibrium? Okay, no. Want to know what'll happen? Drop a tablespoon of olive oil into a cup of water. Observe results and realize that you won't have integration, but hostility. The idea of "us and them" will form on either side. I've never had a person vendetta against any CP student, but when you share your schedule with a peer and you say "AP English, APUSH, and Physio Honors" they kind of just look at you and go "ew, why?". The only thing I hate is that when they list off all their CP classes, you're not allowed to have the same reaction without running the risk of looking like a condescending douchebag.

Cameron "That One Kid That Sits Next to Alex" Lee | [April 12, 2012 11:44 PM](#)

I have written this blog three times now. In my head, I know exactly how I feel about the topic, but

I seem unable to verbalize my thoughts. I suppose the best place to start is with ethos. Throughout elementary and middle school, I was enrolled in the GATE program, which was supposedly created for those who were a bit sharper than the rest and needed an additional intellectual challenge. This fit me well, because I was bored at the slow pace of the class at that time, and I didn't need to be taught how to multiply 10X10 times like the rest of my classmates. Logically from there, I should have moved on to the more advanced AP/Honors track in high school. I didn't follow this path. For my first two years of high school, I took College Prep classes, except for Honors Geometry, Honors Algebra 2, and Honors Chemistry. Currently, I am taking AmEx, College Prep Psychology (after dropping down from AP Psych), College Prep Trigonometry, College Prep Physics, and Spanish 3. Since I have been in both College Prep and AP/Honors classes, I can surely state two things: the environment of AP/Honors classes is much different than that of College Prep, and combining the two tracks would be a horrible idea.

Before Mr. Geib had brought the divide to my attention (and Mr. Koch exaggerated the

divide), I never considered AP students to be 'superior' in any way. From my experience, I've found that there are two reasons that one chooses not take an AP/Honors class: academics is not their area of prowess, or they have no desire to do the extra work that comes with the class. There are also two reasons I've noticed that one might feel greatly inclined to take an AP class: they are college-minded and want the class on their transcript, or (and I see this very rarely) they truly have an interest in gaining new knowledge from the class. The latter reasons to both have been the reasoning behind my class choices; I've either taken College Prep because I didn't want to do the extra work, or I've taken AP/Honors because I wanted to learn. I've always seen that College Prep kids just want to get through the class with a decent grade, while AP students want to work hard to excel in the subject.

This is why we cannot combine AP and College Prep into one track. If you put a bunch of indifferent kids in a class that require them to work hard and pay attention, their grades will be crushed under the workload. Alternately, if you put a bunch of quick witted, knowledge seeking kids in a class that is below their level, they will end up getting bored and goofing around instead of taking anything of value out of the class. I saw both of these occurrences in two of my classes from last year: the now infamous Period 3 and 4 classes of Mrs. Houlahan.

Since the class was College Prep, Mrs. Houlahan was unable to fit in all of the information that she would have liked to teach us, but she still fit in more content than some of the kids could handle. Some of the students (such as J.C., Patrick, and myself) were in the class because we didn't want to do the work of an Honors History and English class, so we spent the whole time cracking jokes, not doing the homework, and torturing poor Mrs. Houlahan. Despite our constant shenanigans, the three of us easily understood the material presented, and aced nearly every test that was put in front of us, and tried to provide the answer to every question. Since we took up so much time causing distractions, challenging Mrs. Houlahan, and answering all the questions, we ended up forcing Mrs. Houlahan to rush through the content of the class at a pace that not everyone could handle. Putting Honors-level kids like us in a College Prep-level class negatively affected the grades of some of the other students, proving my point that the levels should not be combined. By the end of that class, we had nearly half of the people hating us (mostly me I admit), and the other half of us just being disruptive and attempting to reduce the class into a state of anarchy.

I don't get this same chance to raise hell in AP; I'm usually too busy trying to absorb the information that Mr. Geib is presenting to us. If I were in Mrs. Adam's class with my fellow anarchists, I would probably be raising hell just like last year. For the sake of everyone's education, it is better to keep students who are both sharp and curious in AP classes, and the other less interested kids in College Prep classes. It's not that I think one type of class is better than the other, I just think that the curriculum was designed differently for good reason: to better suit the different students.

Jongseung Baek | [April 12, 2012 11:47 PM](#)

*Note that Jongseung tried to write this blog 3 times. This is trial 4.

So we have about 250 students in our Junior year, right? I think I know only about half of those student. And about 95% of that half would be from AP. I am a bit of the blame, for I did not actively try to look for other Juniors. No, I still have trouble memorizing names of Juniors that I know. Why would I bother to find more names to memorize? And beside that, how am I suppose to introduce myself? Hi, I am from AP and I never had a class with you, but I'd like to be your friend? Maybe if that person had EDA, Biology, or PE together, I could try to make it work. However, my memory is... quite terrible. Besides, I am not running for ASB president or something like that... I never really thought walking around and sit next to CP kids and make them as my friend was necessary. There are times that I felt like I should have been active like when people ask, "People is really small school so you must know everyone in your junior class!"

But then again, my sloth triumphs my guilt. And I sit down with my usual friends (hey at least my group has CP students as well).

I think I know why CP students think AP students with top hats and monocles would look down and judge CP students. I can see the elitism. So if you want to lower the gap between CP and AP kids, just have giant meeting with both CP and AP. And we can talk it out. I just think that AP and CP do not get along because we basically get separated after Freshman year. We would be still able to get the result we want by talking to each other.

Marco Herrera | [April 12, 2012 11:48 PM](#)

My first reaction to hearing that AP classes will be no more was that “well good thing I got all of my AP and Honor courses done”. I would also think of the other students who are grades lower than us. How would they feel if they wanted to get ahead and be challenged intellectually but they could not because the harder classes were not offered? I think this decision of integrating classes would actually demotivate students; it would make them slack off more because they have the room for it.

I remember being in freshmen Geography and Health with Mrs. Adams. Every freshman had to take that class so there was no segregation of any kind. I was in a classroom with multiple class clowns and people who just simply did not care about the class. I would always loathe hearing the class clowns talk. They would only raise their hands or speak out loud to say some idiotic comment or remark. Mrs. Adams always looked at me like I was angel simply because I got all my work done, performed well on tests, and stayed quiet. While she would look on some of the others as delinquents or as she would simply put it “idiots”. A part of me misses regular classes because of how much easier they are than the fast pace AP classes, but then I do not get a challenge and I do not get same experience with the different people.

My friend, who shall remain nameless, was asking me why I was taking AP if it's so hard. If I just took college prep I could be like him and have almost all A's. They way I saw it, my friend doesn't challenges. I like challenging myself with the unfamiliar, and it took this blog to remind why I'm even taking AP courses in the first place. I took it for two reasons: to look good for colleges, and to challenge myself. It was ultimately my choice. That's what a lot of college prep students don't understand. Yeah we AMEX students complain a lot about the course, but we love the abuse. These thought provoking questions such as this blog is what we like.

Integrating the classes together would make just another freshmen required class. You'll get your diverse students with some unhappier than others due to the setbacks of not being able to advance farther and faster. Getting rid of AP would just be a shame.

Lauren Hughart | [April 13, 2012 12:08 AM](#)

I think the class is in consensus that the “No AP” proposition would be utterly ridiculous and, frankly, unfair. I agree with this completely. I've erased and rewritten this blog about three times now, and after an hour of contemplation and contradicting myself, I've decided I'll just say everything on my mind instead of censoring myself. I think AP students have the right to be proud of their accomplishments in AP classes—it's hard work for anybody! Are we better students than CP kids? Well, let's see who scores higher on the AP Psychology Test or the AP US History Final. Even in Honors Physiology, who do you think gets the better raw test scores? Let's face it: we probably have better study skills, better work ethics, and an overall easier time grasping the material. I know CP students who work so extremely hard to just understand the material, yet it just doesn't come easy to them. But then again, I know CP students who get high everyday and smoke who knows what during lunch and have that dgaf/yolo attitude that will get them nowhere in life and don't even pretend like they care or try to succeed in school. I don't want to be in classes with them—they wreak havoc on the teachers and disrupt the class every 3 minutes to put in their useless, unnecessary, annoying comments.

Just like in the real world, there will always be a huge gap between the different classes, whether it's educational or social/wealth. Deal with it. If you don't like it, work hard to rise to the top. If you're fine with being at the bottom of the food chain, then don't glare or scoff at AP students working on homework during break. Mr. Geib kept talking about how, as AP students, we should encourage, support, guide, aid, and help the CP kids learn more and blah blah blah. Is that our responsibility though? No! I don't want to be responsible for some lazy ass that doesn't appreciate the education he's getting and who says school is pointless. I actually want to learn—I enjoy learning and love being in AP classes. And in all honesty, if this kind of work ethic is supposed to transfer to CP students when/if AP students help them to rise, it would have happened in Freshman Biology, where everyone was shoved into the same level class. Even in Freshman Biology, there was a definite hierarchy—everyone knew who the smart kids were & you either envied their natural talent or hated them because they were goody two shoes. There's no winning. If there were only CP classes, the more advanced students would still rise and excel to the top, while the “I hate school” kids would remain sunken and careless. Take out all CP classes and create only AP classes and what do you get? Students getting “D”s and “F”s like crazy and either solidifying their hatred of school or having a detrimental impact on their academic confidence. Anyone can sign up for AP; if they wanted to then

they would have.

However, with this being said, there is a definite difference between being a better student than someone else & being a better person than someone else. No AP student is a better PERSON than a CP student. I think that the CP kids might interpret AP students' "elitist attitudes" as them being a wholly better person & student than a CP student. Morals, values, ideas, and virtues define who someone is, not their grades or their academic achievement.

Clare Haffner | [April 13, 2012 12:09 AM](#)

Sometimes, I wish I was stupid. It's kind of a strange thing to wish for, I know, but to me it sounds pretty good. It seems like there would be so much less pressure. You wouldn't be expected to perform at a certain level. A B would be considered an achievement, not a failure. You wouldn't feel obligated to enroll in every AP or Honors class offered. You wouldn't make it to a four-year university but then you wouldn't expect to, and therefore it would not be a disappointment. Life would be so much less stressful.

But I'm not stupid. I was placed in GATE when I was in second grade and I have never had any doubt that I belong in Honors and AP classes. Do I think that AP courses should be abolished in the name of academic equality for all students? Of course not. I don't think that kids with a higher IQ owe anything to students who happen to be graded with less intellectualism.

I do think that something needs to change, though. The school system is, in my opinion, seriously messed up. Why does school place value on things which have no relevance in life? My first day of Algebra 2 Honors sophomore year, Mr. Villano said himself, "You're never going to actually use this stuff when you grow up." Why then, do schools bother to teach it? Why is so much importance placed on getting good grades in subjects which are of little use in life? I mean, in the "real world," is the fact that you took AP U.S. History when you were in high school really going to help you all that much?

And then I think maybe AP classes aren't such a good idea after all. I agree that students who enjoy learning and who are gifted with high intellectualism should be separated from those who either need to move at a slower rate or just don't give a crap about school. But AP classes are misguided. Sure, they are full of students who excel in things such as reading, writing, mathematics, logic, comprehension, etc. But are these students, are we AMEXers, really more advanced than other kids because reading comes naturally to us? Because we process information at a faster pace? AP students are generally accepted to be the higher class of students, however politically incorrect that might sound, but are we really at a greater advantage in regards to life than college prep kids because we are more book smart and academically oriented? I don't think so.

In a way, I respect AP students less than I do college prep students. AP kids (myself included, obviously) buy into the system shamelessly. And the system is WRONG. School should teach things that actually pertain to real life. And I think that if schools did that, if schools did their best to prepare kids for what life is really like instead of obsessing over report cards and GPA's, then they would find perhaps that the college prep kids and AP kids would be on much more equal footing.

Halina Do-Linh | [April 13, 2012 12:25 AM](#)

As more time passes, the number of blogs being posted increases- I am getting nowhere. It's getting late, and I'm becoming frustrated. I've decided to hell with diction and syntax and even making sense; I'm just going to write.

I used to live in Fillmore. There, I was enrolled in a very, very average and highly disciplinary middle school for 2 months before moving to Ventura and then attending Cabrillo. From personal experience, I can promise you there is a definite difference between both schools. On the third day of classes I witnessed my first fight where a girl aggressively broke another girl's nose. During lunch, I was once threatened to be stabbed if I didn't give up my lunch money. Administrators acted more like patrol officers, keeping careful eye on each student. And after a month my teacher quit her job because she was unable to control our class- we actually drove her to insanity. Despite a chaotic environment, I excelled in my classes; perhaps too easily. The truth was in the face obvious, these kids didn't care. Education was not a priority at all. Two months later, upon arriving to Cabrillo, I was shocked. I had been registered for Miss Morningstar's GATE classes and students actually paid attention! And they were smart; really, really smart. I was no longer the "top dog" like I was used to be; now I simply belonged.

It's true; there can be a difference between AP/ Honor students versus the College Prep students. In fact, the most significant difference I hear most often is about the conversations that occur in the classroom. However, the amount of arrogance and over-generalizations I've seen or heard in the past few days is, quite frankly, ridiculous. The classes we take do not completely define us. Personally, if AMEX wasn't a combined history-english class I wouldn't be taking APUSH. It's not my interest, nor my best subject. AP kids aren't some "elite" force that should be worshipped by the student body, it simply another option. It's a benefit for those who desire a faster pace and more challenges. College Prep is just normal- is it not okay to just be normal these days?

I would hope another reason why we're all here taking AMEX is because we love to learn. In that case, even if AP/ Honors were abolished wouldn't students be taking the time to learn outside of school? I know of students who listen to hour long lectures or take additional extracurricular classes or use the extra hours in their day to research certain subjects merely because they thrive on learning new information on subjects that interest them. So, it shouldn't even matter- right? I hate to think we only take these classes in order to boost our GPA's.

Bethany Eckstrom | [April 13, 2012 12:25 AM](#)

I'm not the stereotypical AP kid: I won't cry over a B, I get 6-7 hours of sleep nearly every night, and one of my best friends is in College Prep. My three AP classes don't consume the rest of my life.

But that doesn't keep me from caring immensely about my schoolwork, or loving the AP environment that I've chosen to be a part of. It relieves me to be in a class where most, if not all of the students around me are equally motivated about their grades. And as most of us have agreed, I don't believe that combining the AP and CP students into one class would end well for anyone.

It's wrong to stick to generalizations. Not all CP students are druggies who don't care about their futures, and not all AP students are snobs who refuse to associate with those beneath them. The difference is that the kids in AP are the ones who were willing to challenge themselves academically. Because of this, it would be hard for these two types of teenagers to mix in a compromising academic setting. That's why AP classes have such a different atmosphere and feeling.

I've been in college prep classes where it has been clear that I'm one of the only people who cares. But I've also been in more difficult college prep classes that do have more people who put in plenty of effort. I'm taking college prep Physics this year, and despite the fact that it isn't AP, there are way more kids to try to succeed than there were in a class like freshman Biology.

I believe that the real issue comes not when you mix "AP kids" and "CP kids", because each of those labels is completely conditional. Conflict comes when you put kids who care with ones who don't.

Liam Pestrella | [April 13, 2012 12:28 AM](#)

I would be completely fine with taking a college prep course. I would be completely fine with spending time learning each and every person's name in that college prep class. I am not better or above anybody else. And neither are you. Frankly I find it surprising that such "intelligent" students have such a closed minded biased towards others who choose a different path to take in their high school. A majority of AP students have been enrolled in the GATE program in elementary and junior high and because of this have been conditioned to believe and think that they are superior to all other students. Just because you think you understand more, work harder, go into more depth, and most of all earn that 5.0 grade that Dad's been pressuring you to get ever since you were a freshmen should not be criteria for placing yourself highly on your imaginary, artificial caste system. Many people who said that they would be highly disappointed if AP courses were cut from Foothill reasoned with the fact of a challenging course. Information and knowledge is out there regardless of a class you are taking. The internet, libraries (although dwindling), and people are always available. You can challenge yourself outside of school using the same information we are learning right now in AmEx; although you may not be given chapter packets, DBQs, and tests, to your utter contempt. And you would not only be challenging and excelling yourself, but actually learning the subject in great depth and profoundness.

The bottom line is, high school is really not that big of a deal as many of you translate it

to be. Yes, it is a check point before college, but I believe many of us are forgetting how lucky we are to be students. To be learning for a living is a very, very remarkable thing and instead of categorizing and demonizing "lesser" students you should be focusing on yourselves and pushing yourselves to the best of your ability. There is no reason to worry about anyone else but yourself; the kids who take college prep had every chance to join this now elitist club and they decided not to. It's not fair to judge them accordingly and it's not fair for them to judge us, unless you give them a reason too. Keep your head down and your pencil moving. Time will help them find their place in the world while it will help us find ours. In about thirty or so years you won't remember any of the walls you built up around the AmEx class, but you will be affected by the decisions and judgments you made upon yourself, not others.

Mickel The Anti-Gangster Saldana | [April 13, 2012 12:42 AM](#)

I'm going to deviate a little from the prompt and address in part the question given to us by Mr. Geib earlier today.

I live near gangsters, some of the kids I used to play with when I was little kid – back in the marvelously innocent days when we didn't even know what drugs were and we held our breath as we walked by people who were smoking – have grown up to become the very people I speak about now, only now the veil of childhood is lifted and I know what it is they truly do, and quite honestly, what they truly smoke. I don't want these people in my school; I much less want them in the class I have been working at all year. This may sound a little arrogant to some of you, but I do think I'm better than them. They do drugs, I don't. They drink on a regular basis; I've never had so much as a sip. Many of them have already dropped out of school and me, well here I am: an elitist AP kid. Perhaps I'm doing a poor job of explaining myself, but the very thought of AP and Honors classes being abolished for the sake of academic communism (for this is really what it seems to be) angers me. Assume these so called gangsters were in our school, were in CP and then suddenly next year, all of us were forced to share a class room with them just because some people feel like it would be good for them to be exposed to the "All-Stars", get a little of our "smart juice" on them. As I told many Mr. Geib today right before I left: "What if they get their stupid juice on me." Now simply because their gangsters doesn't mean their stupid, but to me the choice to do drugs, heck the choice to associate or become a gangster in general is a stupid idea and stupid choice, so excuse me if I consider them just a little stupid. I like my AP classes, I like the thought that next year my schedule will consist of new fewer and no less than 5 AP courses. It's going to be one hell of a year, but you know what? BRING IT ON!

Now try to get a gangster to say that. Dropping all pretenses of political correctness (assuming they haven't been dropped already) many of them will quite simply and rather very sadly say this: F*** THAT SH**!!!!

And now we come to the other spectrum of CP students, those who are truly motivated, truly trying to succeed in their classes, but perhaps chose to take CP for their own reasons, I wouldn't mind in the slightest sharing classes with them, they too are motivated, AP kids at heart, if not in schedule. But get rid of AP classes, and we will be enrolled in classes that engulf the entire spectrum of high school students; from the slackiest most druggiest of the gangsters, to the preppiest most overachieving of the bunch. And like I said before, I don't want the earlier in my classes!

André Sehati | [April 13, 2012 12:56 AM](#)

I'd like to travel back in time to when I felt the true meaning of this topic fell into my life.

Remember GATE?

GATE was a program, such as AP and honors in high school, but for Elementary and junior high school students. Technically, GATE stands for Gifted And Talented Education (what ever the heck that means) and was a way for student to excel at a young age. There was a test given for enrollment in the so-called "program" and my sisters and I all applied.

Desiree was the only one who passed, after Chloe and I failed three times each...pretty much determined the smarter one out of us three.

Anyway, Desiree went on in the more "gifted" classes while Chloe and I hung around in the norm of students, or the less superior.

Coming from an AP student today, once a college-prep adolescent tween, GATE kids were the elitists of their time. They had the special projects, fancy professional letters flooding

mailboxes to go travel in Japan for some summer abroad trip, and honor among all faculty in the school. They had their homework printed on gold and written in diamonds with what seemed to be rocket science and quantum physics on steroids (in the 8th grade, little Einsteins). It seemed as if they had it all.

But after all those years of triplets divided, I'm happy I wasn't accepted into GATE. Im happy I couldn't understand what shape came next in the circle-circle-square-triangle-diamond-hexagon-smartagon assembly line that determined how DIFFERENTLY and GIFTED you thought versus the rest of the school....wait. Doesn't EVERYONE think differently? Doesn't EVERYONE have a gift? What more did GATE kids have to face than us regular-classed 8th graders? More pressure? More stress? Competition within competition?

Doesn't it sound a lot like AP?

I believe college prep kids get the big picture a lot clearer than AP kids. As an AP student, I notice that I've twiddled (is that even a word?) myself in the cocoon of anxiety, college, and A's and 9's and 5's spiraling down in the deep, dark, thick roots of the education tree- and just enough to where the only view I see of life is the way down. We're so wrapped up in the worries of college and scores and comparisons amongst our classes to the point where we've lost the definitions of "relax" and "city college" and B's. College prep students may not have the workload of an AP student, but they sure do know that there's more than one way to go to school and receive the same education as straight-off attending UCWorkHarder. Why can CP students get A's a lot easier than we can? At least half of it has to do with their stress-free environment. In fact, they could even teach us a thing or two on history or even how to study history.

Even within AP, I feel as if there are the CP AP and the AP/AP levels in class. We've created a whole separate school within two classes! Can you believe that? Who do we think we are.

Now I'm a strong believer in equality, and CP students are no different than we are. They aren't mutants of another world that frolic around campus like it's no one's business. We can't only put into account that they may not want to work as hard, but maybe they mentally CAN'T work as hard, because their strengths are focused somewhere else that's just as equally important. Maybe they have other struggles at home that we don't know about and they chose to prioritize with what's most important to them to balance on their plates.

Maybe they can't afford AP tests.

My point being, integration of classes isn't a bad idea. We can learn a lot from each other, regardless of our academic differences. I feel their exclusion; I was once there. Let's not make it any worse.

Lia Monaco | [April 13, 2012 1:51 AM](#)

What is this elitism that most AP/Honors students hold over those in college prep? It honestly makes me a little angry to think that some put themselves before others according to the classes they are taking. Having pride in and applauding one's self for taking on the challenge and doing more work is perfectly acceptable, but what isn't acceptable whatsoever is looking down one's nose at someone else because of their own personal choices. This year has certainly been that wake up call for me. Last year, in Ms. Eulau's and Mr. Dinkler's classes I thought I classified as somehow almost a better student than kids taking college prep english and world history. I remember being in the Pod, tackling my Who's Responsible paper while glancing over at the group of college prep sophomores goofing off on a computer next to me. "If only they knew how little work they have compared to me, they should be doing something else with their time... like studying for their five question quiz on World War I..." I thought while trying to keep my focus on the daunting 3 pages of Word Document I had screaming at me from the computer screen. It was times like these that I thought, well why not scorn them in contempt? They chose the easy route to a community college, they chose to only take the bare minimum, I qualified and qualified my reasons using a snobby attitude not inexistent among my fellow classmates. But, with dawning of the new year, the age of Junior hell, I got a sharp slap across the face of a wake up call. The first quarter, I slid by. My grades were substantial, but not great, and I was just catching up to speed. I thought, hey, it's the beginning of the year, I'm getting the hang of things, maybe changing my study habits will make a difference. But, as soon as quarter two hit I knew I was in deep trouble. No matter how hard I tried, no matter how many hours I spent staring at my

regular Trig homework trying to decipher those Sin functions and Mr. Kellogg's notes I knew I was barely going to scrape by. Being too prideful (and stupid) to ask for help, spending what seemed like hours more than my fellow classmates studying for Honors Physiology tests only to receive embarrassingly low scores and battling Amex homework most nights, broke me down. Suddenly, I was envious of Juniors taking regular English and History. Those terrible multiple multiple choice tests were nonexistent in those classes. Random frustrating AP test practice quizzes in English? Pfft. They didn't even have to stress about the test. Not only was I bending to the breaking point under stress over these classes, I wanted to keep a social life and maybe squeeze in some sleep. I know some current Juniors say, "Amex isn't that bad, I get more than 9 hours of sleep every night and still have the time to study", or "coffee is disgusting", but that never worked for me. I feel like I had to work ten times harder in my math and physiology classes just to keep up, and if I had continued sports this year, who knows what type of wreck I would be now. My long, and drawn out point being, I now do not feel the need to put down those students because they aren't in stressful, challenging classes. I feel terrible for even thinking those thoughts in the first place, but now, at the peak of my stress-limit, I actually envy them. They have time! They have time to do whatever they please, and are still, for the most part going to get into UC's and get glorious jobs on Wall street. I, on the other hand? The one who last year scoffed at some "delinquents" out of (what is now) jealousy am most likely going to get into the last college I apply to, hopefully get a minimum wage job and work my ass off to get mediocre grades in college. Not everyone in AP is a homework-loving, exceedingly brilliant, flashcard fanatic, I being the example. I am just as smart as those people in college prep, and in some ways I wish I would have saved myself the nervous breakdowns during finals week and just taken the easier classes, but I didn't. Roughing it through Junior year, is what makes you a Junior, and if you don't have a semi difficult time... well good for you. You're in the minority. But, to the point of the blog, because of people like me last year, getting rid of AP classes would just be suicide for the school's CST scores. Although I know and think there are extremely smart and extremely lazy college Prep and Amex students alike, mixing the two together wouldn't be beneficial for anyone. Those once high-and-mighty AP students would even have more of a "reason" to look down upon those who are trying their hardest in college prep because the material isn't as high level as they would have liked. In reverse, the college prep students would probably have a more difficult time accepting slightly more difficult material put in the classes to "average it out". It is better to maintain the AP classes as is, giving those students who want it, the opportunity to take the challenge of a harder curriculum and a stricter schedule, and it also leaves college prep students to choose classes more suitable for them. We all have our reasons for why we choose what, but can't we just leave the other person alone and agree to disagree? After all, belittling someone will never make you the bigger person.

Elizabeth Riddle | [April 13, 2012 3:37 AM](#)

Choice, individuality, arrogance, snobbish, druggie, motivated vs. unmotivated...COMMUNISM! I've been skimming through blog site postings for about 20 min. now and so far every post has contained at least one of these words in it. My opinion here is indefinitely neutral. On the one hand, I don't want to be in college prep classes because I want the approval of being in and doing well in AP classes. When I filled out my Junior Registration form last year I knew that by choosing to go into AP I would have an advantage (that is if I did well..). Yet just because I didn't choose college prep class doesn't mean I think any less of the class curriculum or the students taking it. As a matter of fact way back in 2009 when I was applying for high-school and had just heard about this strange, barely 10 yr. old high-school called "Foothill Technology" I was intrigued. Classmates, parent's co-workers, old acquaintances, you name it all gave me rave reviews. Some people even remarked how "the college prep courses here are like the AP courses at Buena or Ventura!" If you really think about it, everyone here, at least everyone who came here on their own accord, chose to go here for the simple reason that they knew a challenge would await them. Overall they knew that the school itself was going to be different from one of the other district schools. If they got in trouble they would be reprimanded and answer to what they've done. They would be facing classes, teachers, and fellow students who were at an academic level far above their own. For these reasons (and probably a little influence from their parental units) they applied and were lucky enough to get in. These students then decided judged for themselves after being here for however long what they

could or would do to advance their academic future. Or whether they wanted to advance their academic future at all.

The only issue that I have with AP being integrated with college prep is the same as pretty much everyone else on this blog. "The classes would be 'dumbed down', I wouldn't be able to choose anymore, I wouldn't learn anything from these other students...etc" and then the world would implode and mankind as we know it would come to an end. But anyway, I want to say that I really enjoy being able to say that I am an AP student, I chose this, this is what I want. Even and especially after all the countless hours I spend taking the time out of my day to digest the boatload of information we are expected to learn on a daily basis. It's a difficult thing to do and I see this, all the time as the excuse to put down fellow students for not being able to do as amazing as so and so who is able to balance sports and Amex and Bioscience and honors trig, and cleaning homeless people, and finding the cure for cancer. Just so many excuses!

Even though I would be upset if the AP classes were wiped out, I have to say that I've been in college prep classes, like many other AP students and in my experiences I've never had any issues. Maybe I should owe some of it to coming from a school where I was used to being in classes where a majority of the students didn't care about their education, and that was completely their choice. But when I look back at Biology, English, and Health I can say that I really did learn a lot despite the mix of college prep and AP students.

I think that I'll just end by saying that I don't want to have the classes integrated. I like that I am learning so much history, more-so than in the college prep class it's just that as AP students we can't take that for granted or denigrate the kids who have decided not to be in the class. As a matter of fact when I asked my friends who are in college prep why they didn't want to take AP courses or only wanted to take maybe one, possibly two, they gave me answers like "well I don't want to stress out during my senior year with all that hard work" which I understand, completely. But it broke my heart when they also said they couldn't stand being around such a mean, snobbish group of people. This happens to be a reason why I didn't know whether or not to take AP classes next year. I figured that by that time a lot of the incoming seniors would have fulfilled their A-G requirements so the only people left in those core classes would be people who wanted to end their high-school career strong. And if it meant not having to be around the people that constantly put down others just because of reasons that they may not be aware of, well then so be it. I would gladly become a part of the college prep crowd and give up the AP title if it meant I wasn't surrounded by so many conceited people.

I've pretty much said all that has come to mind at this point but personally don't feel that the integration would work. If you feel like that decision would make everyone equal, you may be right. But would you really risk having an entire student body upset that they have to deal with their polar opposites? I should think not.

Lindaluz Carbajal | [April 13, 2012 5:16 AM](#)

I don't think I would mind if they got rid of AP and CP classes. Colleges would not select students based on the amount of challenging classes they took throughout high school; rather they would be forced to have a closer look at the individual. They would obviously still look at grades, if you're a hard worker or a slacker, they would look at background and the extracurricular activities that every student has done (including community service, sports, tutoring ect.). Most complain how they feel the pressure to stand out in college applications that they take all these AP and Honors classes, but that wouldn't exist anymore! In order to appeal to a college people would focus their time doing something that benefits and improves the community, instead of being sucked up in a book studying for that coming AP exam. No more "being just a number" to a college, because now you would have a name and a personality. Every generation has made the system worse, maybe that's why there's a lot more cheating and dishonesty. This whole AP and CP thing, it's made getting into a good college so much harder and there are so many students focusing all their time for that A in AP History that it's become a self-centered system in which a student isn't worrying about anything else but that A. Anyways, we are not going to get rid of AP and CP classes; it's just never going to happen. The majority would complain and state that the education they are receiving is not at its highest, but I always say your best is always your best no matter where you are and in what environment you are learning in. If you are a hard worker, you will remain one. It wouldn't matter anymore what class you took, because all colleges would see is what kind of person you were/are.

Jennifer Lundberg | [April 13, 2012 6:40 AM](#)

There are some parts of life that need to be done, to some extent, alone. High school is about the individual. We are all in the middle of some of the most difficult and trying times of our life, adolescents. Everyone is trying to find them self, learn the answer to the question of life. This is the time when some begin to define who they want to be. Personalities can vary deeply depending on the environment one is placed in. A person that is always the first to answer the question in class may not be the smartest. The kid that quietly does their work, never says a thing, and goes unnoticed in class could have real academic potential. So instead of combining AP and CP maybe classes should be based on personality to give all the shy kids a better chance without fear of the overtly extroverted crushing them to a pulp during Socratic seminars.

Should a person not take advanced placement classes just to make someone that took college prep feel better about themselves? No. We need to learn so much more than just academics in high school. For four year we have the chance to test our abilities, to push ourselves to the edge. If we crash and burn, great! Better to do it now in protective pseudo-world call high school when there is an opportunity to get back up.

What about college? When high school ends should those with promise in math, those who dream of perusing a major in art and those who want to study medicine abroad in Africa be held back to help the many? At the end of next year we should all go to Ventura College to ensure equality of the education system. Perhaps classes should be standardized as well and then we can be tested on them to ensure everybody gets their standard education. Oh wait. . . By standardizing the system individuality will be quashed like the insignificant bug it is. After all how important is the individual when compared to the entire population? We must consider "The Greater Good."

In 9th grade I took honors English. I got D's or F's on most of the essay's and thought annotating would be the death of me. Despite that I enjoyed listening to the Socratics and got a chance to read some deep thought provoking books. Yes one can argue that I could read classics whenever I want but how much would I have understood of Romeo and Juliet without Mrs. Rodrigues' explanations every now and then? We did not just read books we learned them. Yet in 10th grade I took college prep English. I needed a break and I still had a pleasant year chockfull of learning. The class was not always on its best behavior but I still learned. That being said I doubt I rubbed any smart on them and quite honestly few would need it. I have no right to judge anyone based on what classes they take. Sure hazy generalizations can be made but they tell far from the whole story.

How far must we go to reach equality? No matter what is done to the system there will always be some form of inequality. Is that bad? If the freedom to take advanced or college prep or general education is taken away and everyone is shoveled onto the same track what would be the point of trying? Or would we all get a track randomly chosen for us to provide the "best" for the community as in Anthem by Ayn Rand?

" We are one in all and all in one.

There are no men but only the great WE,

One, indivisible and forever." ~Ayn Rand, Anthem

Jaime Vandever | [April 13, 2012 6:44 AM](#)

Up until I made it into high school, it seemed like classes were made to teach to the lowest common denominator. If you were already reading by the time you made it into kindergarten, too bad; you'd be stuck learning your abc's and rat-cat-hat's with the rest of your sticky brethren. By the time I had reached second grade, I had stoically come to realize that it didn't matter if you were smart or borderline "special", school would suck either way. While I was happy I wasn't one of the kids that couldn't subtract 17 from 42 without the teacher hovering over my shoulder, the fact that I basically daydreamed through my first nine years of schooling didn't make me feel that much better about it.

At the beginning of this year (and at multiple times throughout it) Mr. Geib has disparagingly mentioned the classes where you could get an A without even trying. For all of elementary school and a fair chunk of high school, those were the kinds of classes I was forced to be in. I spent lecture times reading Roald Dahl and Harry Potter under my desk, or doodling cubes and stick figures in my paper's margins, and then taught myself the material in the half an hour a week I spent doing homework. I had never actually had a class that didn't turn out to be an easy A until I started taking the honors and AP classes here at Foothill. And that's why, when I found myself actually worried that I wouldn't get

that A in Mrs. Dowler's freshman honors English class, I eagerly signed my soul away to the college board my junior year. I had already sleepwalked through nine years of high school prep classes, and I had absolutely no desire to suffer through another four years of college prep ones. I didn't sign up for AMEX because it would look good for colleges or because it would make my parents happy (although I do appreciate the bonuses), but because, for the first time since I had realized that 99% of worksheets consisted of rewording sentences from the textbook and that 99% of tests could be passed with flying colors using .99% of my attention span, school was actually meant to teach you stuff you couldn't learn just as quick (or quicker) on your own.

So, yeah, I would be upset if I was shoved back into college prep classes next year; just like, I imagine, a majority of college prep kids would be if they were shoved, unwillingly, into AMEX. I'm not taking this class because I'm white, or middle-class, or because I think all college prep kids are drug dealing, test copying gangsters that would "bring me down" to their putatively horrible level if I was forced to share a math class with them; because, while I am relatively middle class, I'm also the daughter of two people who never graduated from college. (I don't think my dad ever even made it to past his junior year of high school.) So, no to AP elitism. I'm taking AMEX because I (grudgingly) have come to like history, (inexplicably) enjoy learning about it, and would (definitely) rather have it be taught to me by the (surprisingly) humorous Mr. Geib than myself and the dry textbook.

So, yeah. I guess they could abolish AP classes, and send us all to learn the same boring stuff I'm sure most of us could pass in our sleep. Then again, they could make AP classes the standard, and send everyone into Mrs. Kindred's english class, where, after a few choice moments with her crazy Catholic school stories and weird Mr. Villa discussions, the prospect of multiple-multiple choice tests and forty-five minute in class essays might not seem as bad.

Either way, unless this revolution was extended all the way down the school system, pulling Harvard and Stanford down to VC's level, and then into the corporate level, so doctor's and CEO's can make as much as your average migrant farmworker, I'm sure that it won't change or matter to the whole of society one bit.

Nate Hendrix | [April 13, 2012 6:49 AM](#)

The way I see it, we are a democratic society, one which has never had full equality of anything beyond Civil Rights since the time of Martin Luther King. Since when has America successfully implemented a homogenous culture within our society? There will always be a difference of opinion. Now into the crux of the matter.

I can look at my cousin who lives in Oceanside. He goes to one of the better schools in his area, but his parents are divorced, which forces unto him a heavy difference of opinion, one which knows he can get A's in his classes and succeed, and the other who motivates him to overly cultivate his personal life and congratulates him over any C he may earn, because hey, it's better than they could do (seriously). That side is his mothers side(who we all think is a horrible influence on him), and as some background within the past few months she had a baby, and isn't exactly sure who the father is, but had the nerve to ask my cousin's father, now married to my mom's sister, for more child support (the nerve of some people!) They don't care about school, while we do and I am used to be an example for what he should try to accomplish in school, yet he still goes on to fail classes because "he doesn't know the material and doesn't care to learn it". I simply can't understand this mentality (to the point of failing a class at least). It scares me, because we all want him to do well, and he is capable, but his environment is volatile, with divorced parents who still fight over what is best for him. Sadly he's a mommy's boy.

I mention this because between CP and AP, the defining difference is our will to work harder in our classes, while CP kids generally either don't care, or should be in AP but are frightened by the horror stories spread about during registration time. It doesn't mean they are bad students, but on a very generalized scale, school isn't as important to them now, and it doesn't have to be, seeing that there are plenty of other options. Looking at my cousin, he envy's me, he has told me that. Apparently in his eye's I am some sort of golden child because I lead a quiet social life and get good grades all around. It's scary to be the example, the reference or scale for others, especially when you don't feel like you give 100% all of the time.

But I digress. The point is that we aren't so different from CP students, but we are definitely elitists, and there is a mentality or faith put into education different to that which they have. They have an alternative plan, another path in mind, and that is

wonderful, they know what they are doing, whether it involves going to VC later or not pursuing educational efforts, but to put everyone together is not in the least bit, because everyone has a choice to do AP. It's optional; It isn't for everyone, and Educational Communism isn't what the US is capable of doing, because I will not allow my self or eventual children sacrifice a higher standard of education for a social experiment if we are capable of higher standards. It is impossible to offer a median level of education to everyone.

Nikhel Patel | [April 13, 2012 7:35 AM](#)

It's all perspective.

I've been in other honors classes besides history and English at foothill, mainly math and science. This year, I thought I'd try something new and challenge myself. Challenge myself in a way; from what I've heard from past students, that is complete HELL. I felt like it was little bit of exaggerated, but when it boils down to the end of the day, I'm glad I took AP. Not because I'm a "snobby little AP kid" but I like learning. I like the fact of challenging myself.

If the district completely changed all AP classes into college prep, I think it'd be a disaster. Something that needs to be addressed is that not all college prep students are "stupid" or "dumb." I was in college prep English and history last year, and that doesn't mean I'm "stupid" or "dumb." There were many reasons for why I choose to put my schedule the way I did last year. This is the most misunderstood part of this whole dilemma. On the other hand, there are kids who don't care about school in college prep. There are kids you just mess around, text, and put forward little or no effort at all. Sometimes even disrupting the class on a daily basis therefore making it hard to learn.

Therefore, I would be devastated if the district completely took out Honors and AP classes. And let's fact it, most of the kids in the American Experience is taking the American Experience in order to go to the top university of their choice. If AP were taken out, what would give you the edge over somebody else? How would you be challenged? What about the kids who like learning; learning more than just the curriculum says, but getting in depth?

It's all perspective.

Daisy Ahlstone | [April 13, 2012 8:09 AM](#)

Everyone knows creating a class which integrates both college prep and AP kids is a bad idea. There is always going to be the smartest kid in the class, and the immature student who goofs off and slows the class down. I have always been an AP kid, and intend to keep it that way. But none of that has to do with a superiority complex. I take AP, because I skated by with easy As in middle school. I was ready to be challenged. I also have, quite frankly, a love of consistency (explaining my consecutive years of AP and honors) and a fear of what valuable life lessons I would potentially be missing out on in college prep. Lower performing students hog all the teachers time and energy, so the kid who sits at the front and gets an A on every test is completely ignored despite their perfect behavior. They have no need to be disciplined. In my household, my brother gets a hell of a lot of attention. Sometimes I feel ignored, even though I know my parents are proud of me. This happens in classrooms all the time. Integrating the classes would lead to huge gaps in students learning, and would probably get nothing done for either party.

I do not mean to say everyone in college prep disrupts the class, no do I think everyone in AP have received As on every test. Choosing which class to be in depends on your rate of learning. How fast can you learn the presidents? One and a half days? Join AP. Takes you around five days? College prep. No that isn't the most accurate example, but it gets the point across. Everyone learns at a different pace, that doesn't mean ALL AP kids are smarter, and ALL college prep kids are dumb. Some teenagers just need more time to learn things than others.

To me, this prompt has nothing to do with wether AP and college prep should be integrated. It has everything to do with social hierarchy; survival of the fittest. Teenagers by nature are MEANT to try and sort people into groups, by style, intelligence, home life, and class schedule. Everyone wants to get to the top, and the top is unachievable, well, because life sucks. I went home and cried last night, because I was sad. The majority of AP kids burst my bubble of naivety and showed me how truly arrogant they are. I feel like everyone is saying that "we will talk to them, by never be friends" and I just don't understand that! College Prep kids and AP kids ARE STILL KIDS. Just because some one is slightly below you on the scale, does not give you the right to brush them off like they're

nothing.

Today I go in to this Socratic with a broken heart. The maturity of my peers is not where I had previously believed it to be.

Maddie Hermann | [April 15, 2012 12:21 AM](#)

Despite how painfully cliché it is to list famous people to prove a point, I think it is somewhat necessary. My credibility is limited to one side of the glass; I have been strung along, have ricocheted from one "prestigious" class to the next, for pretty much all my life. It's not because of some prodigious natural intelligence, since my intelligence is average at best, but instead because of a long list of happy (?) coincidences that brought me to where I am now. Of course, due to a certain amount of incompetence in math, I wear my college prep B average proudly, but I still think that overall my academic experiences have been pretty limited. So, without further ado:

Why are we convinced that "those" college prep kids are stupid? That they don't care about life (since when did school become a synonym for life?), that they have no worthwhile dreams, that they will never achieve anything more than maybe an Employee of the Month mug at Wal-mart? What about Albert Einstein, whose parents originally thought he was mentally retarded? Or Winston Churchill, who failed the 6th grade? What about good ol' Honest Abe, who received only 5 years of formal education in his lifetime? What about Thomas Edison, who was once told by a teacher he was too stupid to learn anything, or Michael Jordan, who was cut from his high school basketball team because of a "lack of skill," or Beethoven, whose music teacher once said of him, "as a composer, he is hopeless"? The point is, we have no right to judge. The people we look down on in college prep classes aren't all geniuses, but to dismiss their worth by saying "I guess society needs someone to work the microwave at McDonalds" is ridiculous. Maybe it's realism, but I think to imply that such a menial task is the lump sum of one's worth and the poignancy they bring to the world is incredibly arrogant and ignorant. I'm having trouble forming a coherent voice to articulate my opinion; I just find it infuriating that we have made life into this one-dimensional landscape, where there are essentially two paths. You choose (or stumble) onto one path, and that is the path you are stuck with. One leads to a beautiful land with ivy-covered walls and lollipops sprouting from shrubs and the lovely smell of old paper wafting through the air, while the other is a shabby, greasy rat-hole, mottled with fading graffiti and fading potential. Now, which hypothetical path do you think AP represents? Which path do you think is the dilapidated road to nowhere, and which path is shiny and clean and worn smooth from so many people stumbling, unable to see with their noses so very high in the air? This is not what the world is like. There are not two distinct paths, the good and the bad, the smart and the stupid, the talented and the wash-ups. Every person is given a vast amount of talent, which is manifested in different ways. It makes me sad that so many of us, myself included, have forgotten that AP does not determine greatness. We are not superior.

All this being said, however, there is no reason why AP should be taken away. There is a reason why AP and College Prep exist. Some are naturally gifted in school, or have a strong work ethic, and so have a right to cultivate their gift. Some like to learn at a faster pace and be challenged in school, while some would prefer to spend their waking hours surfing or dancing or playing the cello. Some find no interest at all in exponential functions or locating the dorsoepitrochlearis muscle in a mink specimen, but have vibrant passion for art or poetry or fashion or just being. The point isn't making school into a "communistic" environment in which we are not taught to appreciate our different strengths. The point is to accept that we are different. If anything needs to change, it is our mindset, NOT our curriculum.

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