

Are You Prepped? What would you do for a 1600?

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When you were reading *Freckle Juice* and *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* at the age of ten, others were boning up for the SATs.

“High school? Are you kidding? I’ve been going to Elite since way back,” says junior Jennifer Park, who has been attending Elite Academy since the fourth grade.

Elite is one of the many preparatory courses that students take for the SATs. The most popular among Stuyvesant students are Kaplan, Come Come Boys (CCB), Princeton Review, and Elite Academy.

Each course tackles the SATs in different ways, but the objective remains the same—to get the highest score.

“The focus on beating the test right now is more important than learning it, because I think Stuyvesant kids know all the material,” says Christina Sur, who attended Princeton Review and Elite.

Princeton Review, among the most popular courses at Stuy, gives classes three times a week including a day of testing.

“It’s a lot of fun. I had a blast,” says Amy Pandya, who attended Princeton Review over the summer. “I know they purposely get teachers with off balance personalities because they have to pick teachers who are interesting or else you all fall asleep.”

Princeton Review’s aim is beating the test, but some of the teachers get side-tracked.

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“My teachers took us out to play basketball and taught us how to pass,” says senior Wendy Joong.

Some would have rather studied at home: \$700 is a lot to pay [for Princeton Review] when you could get the same books at Barnes & Nobles for \$20, with all the materials,” says senior David Louie.

Kaplan, the self-described revolutionary test prep and Stuy’s favorite according to a *The Spectator* 1994 poll (in this issue), emphasizes group learning.

“Our approach through learning groups is more constructive. People have the same attitudes towards the test and help each other out,” says Kaplan teacher Devon Greenfield.

“I felt that they made more fun than learning. They had more group projects. They gave me some strategies that I didn’t really use during the test,” says senior Kelly Eng, whose score rose 240 points after she attended Kaplan’s six week course twice.

“Kaplan helped me to the extent that I did the work,” says senior Amy Kang, who “took prep classes galore.”

Kang attended Elite and then switched to CCB because it had a bus service. “There were 30 people packed into a small room,” says Kang, who later returned to Elite.

Senior Jenny Kim says, “After we came to America CCB was the first one ever talked about. It’s well known among the Asian population.” CCB has three-hour sessions which include a thirty minute practice test and analysis. “I don’t think it helped. It was a waste of my time and money. Prep-courses are all the same,” says Kim.

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“We have an enrichment program. The emphasis is more on learning something than on the SATs,” says Jenny Kwon, the director of Elite Academy. “Because if you have a student who is good in math and science then they are going to do better on the SATs. If you take Princeton Review or Kaplan for a semester, it’s just for a test.”

Elite’s approach attracted Kang who “went back to Elite, which is a lot more fun. They have better teachers overall. I actually learned. It’s geared toward excelling people so they can do well.”

Without work, though, no one can do well, according to Kim. “How well you do depends on how much you put into it,” she says.