

Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) operated by CESA #9 is a statewide supplemental online course provider that partners with school districts throughout the state, to offer online courses to middle and high school students locally. WVS offers 70 high school courses, middle school courses, and 22 Advanced Placement courses. WVS is in its 8<sup>th</sup> year of operation. We would like to highlight one of our highly qualified advanced placement online teachers – Jon Oestreich. Besides AP Psychology, Jon teaches a number of other high school social studies courses and credit recovery courses. Jon has been extremely successful in work with online students. Let's take a closer look at Advanced Placement Teacher - Jon Oestreich.

### **Describe your background with Advanced Placement:**

I believe experience teaching Advanced Placement (AP) courses helps students succeed in class. As an AP Psychology teacher since 2000, my most recent and beneficial professional development is participation as a Reader for the College Board Exam. As an AP Psychology Reader, I utilize insights gained from the College Board Reading to promote and strengthen student writing in my class. The greatest advantage of being a Reader and attending summer institutes/seminars is worldwide networking with other AP Psychology teachers and college professors.

A solid background in the content area is also important. In the past I attended AP Psychology Summer Institutes and other AP Psychology seminars throughout the year to stay current with AP Psychology. Modifications are occasionally made to content and textbooks. Suggestions to prepare students for the College Board Exam are shared between exam writers and teachers. Regardless of whether a student takes the College Board exam or not, students enrolled in online AP Psychology with Wisconsin Virtual School experience a high quality collegiate class.

### **What skills are needed to teach online AP?**

Multiple skills are needed to teach a high quality online AP course such as, computer skills, content specialty, communication, written developmental skills and finally patience. First, one must be comfortable working with computers and continually stay current with technological updates. Second, one needs to understand the content very well to promote student achievement. Third, written communication skills are essential for student success. Fourth, one should have a program to develop strong writing skills promoting successful writing strategies for students. Finally, an online AP teacher needs patience because teaching these skills does not happen overnight.

### **What challenges have you had teaching AP online?**

New challenges exist when teaching AP online courses. The classroom is now mobile and exists wherever one has power and an internet connection. Challenges can be alleviated by effective time management skills and preparing oneself for an occasional poor internet connection. Living in Wisconsin, I occasionally experience lightning and ice storm internet disconnections for short periods of time. Therefore, useful time management skills to stay updated with student work diminishes potential headaches. I advise all my students to practice good time management skills in-case of an isolated poor internet connection and the result is a lack of procrastination.

Another question I receive from parents or someone considering an online course is the

concern about plagiarism? At Wisconsin Virtual School authentic assessments are exchanged electronically. As an online teacher I utilize multiple online plagiarism resources to verify the authenticity of a student's work. Plagiarism is actually more difficult for an online student compared to a traditional brick and mortar school student due to the quick and immediate availability of plagiarism resources for online teachers.

### **What successes have you had teaching AP online?**

The successes I have teaching online AP Psychology are numerous. First, a majority of students want a mobile and flexible high quality collegiate level class to make the most of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. Online AP courses provide a one to one student/teacher ratio while collaborating with classmates in the courses education framework. Every year I am impressed with the depth and application of communication between students on our discussion boards. Other students take the course because they want to pass the College Board exam. Eighty three percent of my students who took the College Board exam last year scored a four or five (out of five) and advanced to a 200 level psychology course in his/her freshman year of college. This success saves students hundreds or thousands of dollars in college tuition fees.

### **What are your recommendations for students wanting to take AP online courses?**

My recommendation for students wanting to take an online AP course is to go for it. The majority of today's work is done online with computers and school should not be any different. Students recognize the need for a mobile and flexible high quality online education in today's world. In order for students to be productive 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens in a global community, a 21<sup>st</sup> century education must be available for all students.