## Significant Educational Opportunity or Barrier

I was 12 when I wrote my first Python application. Two years later, having realized it was my cup of tea, I decided to become an AI/ML engineer.

Of course, I knew that calculus would be an integral part of the curriculum at college. To get ahead on it – and gain foundational skills to tinker with AI/ML algorithms in my free time – I jumped at the opportunity to join the AP Calculus class.

It wasn't a one-and-done deal for me, however. While my Algebra 1 and 2 and Geometry grades were all As and Bs, my Pre-Calculus grades left much to be desired. I knew I was looking at getting a C at the end of the year when I looked at my grades in December. My teacher was also upfront: if I didn't clean up my act, she wouldn't give me the approval for the AP Calculus class.

That conversation was a wake-up call of sorts for me. Within a week, I was spending at least an hour a day revising everything we'd learned in Pre-Calculus that far after school.

I also hounded the top students in my Pre-Calculus class to get help with concepts that I couldn't wrap my head around on my own. Eventually, one of them agreed to meet up with me once a week to tutor me and help me get ready for AP Calculus.

Burying my head in textbooks, having my tutor's help, and solving problems for weeks on end paid off. My grades turned from Cs into Bs and even As by the end of the year, and another check-in with my teacher confirmed I was finally ready for AP Calculus.