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Compare/Contrast Essay 3

### Experiencing, Then College

For most people, it is a rational, reasonable, and undoubtedly logical idea to go on to higher education after high school. They think that it is the best way to learn and master new knowledge by a series of processes and it is hard to get back on track once the students stop the extension of education after high school. Indeed, some people never go back to college after they take time off to work because of the overwhelming temptations of the outside world and the gradual demoralization of their inside world. However, some other people who go to college after high school flunk out in the first year of college because of the negligent, slack study attitudes and the lack of interest and enthusiasm about their majors. Therefore, if students take a year off after high school to experience the reality of living in the real world and discover themselves before devoting themselves to higher education, students will become more confident, responsible, and independent, which they would not in one year of college.

Young people can realize many values of things and discover their careers by working. Ken, a doctor who works at Haidian Hospital in Beijing, China and a personal friend, took one year to work before college. He worked as a nursing assistant at a hospital, sold ice-cream in parking lots, and delivered mail in the city. When he looked

after a dying patient at a hospital in the evening, he realized that life was short and fragile and felt the family member's importance and preciousness. He learned that people, especially young people, should treasure their lives and keep themselves from violence and off drugs. When he stood in the parking lots and cried his wares to sell ice-cream in the hot summer, he longed for going back to school and studying in the air-conditioned room. He understood that earning money was not as easy as what he had thought. He experienced the toil, so he better understood his parents and gave more respect to them. When he rode a bicycle to deliver the mail in the high winds and heavy rains, he knew that living needed to pay a price. He became more mature and responsible. He found independence and self-esteem. He learned to treasure the value of the dollar and realized that education was very important for his future. He appreciated what he had. When he took care of the patients at the hospital, he thoughtfully regarded how the doctors and nurses relieved the patients' pain and saved their lives. He greatly revered those medical workers. He discovered that he wanted to be a doctor instead of an engineer. After the one year working, he went to a college as a full-time student and studied medicine. What he had learned and experienced during the working year motivated and inspired him to study hard and made him more confident and determined to face his college life and future.

On the other hand, going to college after high school, many students do not have clear aims and do not know what majors they want to study and what kinds of jobs they want to do in the future. They just obey their parents' desires and go to achieve their parents' dreams. As a result, after many years when they find that they are not doing

what they want to do, they may change their jobs or go back to college to study other majors. This is the main reason that results in the waste of education. Moreover, because these students live on the labor of others, they cannot know the value of not having the dollar and cannot understand their parents' pains. Steven, a clerk who works at the Beijing Wits Inactive Technology Development Center, China and also a personal friend, has two degrees. One is in Business Administration, and one is in Computer Science. After high school, he received a college acceptance letter. He didn't know exactly what major in which he was interested and just listened to his parents' decision to study Business Administration. Both of his parents worked hard in a supermarket as common clerks, and his father took a second job at a convenient store in the evening. They saved money from their own expenses to support their son for getting a higher education and expected that he would be a successful businessman one day. Yet, at the last year before graduation, without thinking about his family's financial situation, he announced to his parents that he didn't want to continue his classes and he wanted to change his major to Computer Science. After his parents piteously entreated, he gave in and finished his last year. He got a B.A. degree in Business and worked in a bank as a clerk, a job which many people admired. However, he was not happy and enthusiastic in his job. One day when he waited on a customer depositing money in an account, he didn't pay close enough attention and wrote one more zero that made the number \$500 become \$5000. Finally, he was fired. He wanted to go back to college and study Computer Science, and his parents had to borrow some money from their relatives to support him for another four years.

These two examples are fairly typical of today's college students. On the surface, it seems that these students are not different. They study in colleges, graduate from universities, and get bachelor degrees. In fact, these students are quietly different. They have different study attitudes and motives, and the final results are completely different. One has a clear aim and lofty ideals, so he or she is positive and does things on his or her own initiative. On the contrary, the other neither has an explicit goal nor knows what to do in the future, so it is easy to be negative and passive and lack initiative. As an old saying goes: "You reap what you sowed." Taking a year off before college to experience the reality of living, students will better grasp the real world, make clear the purpose of studying, and truly understand the values of many things and that knowledge is power.