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Dylan Reeves English 100 February 4, 2013 Years Teach Us More Than Books

From a young age, it has been drilled into our minds that going to school is the number one thing we can accomplish to ensure that our future is bright. What defines a bright future, and how should going to school guarantee that we get everything we want? We make these goals throughout our whole life, and in the eyes of our parents and society, graduating from school is the answer to all of them. So the stepping stones are clearly laid out: We go to school and pass each grade as they get progressively harder, pick a major in college, study that field, and hope to graduate with decent enough grades to make a career out of whatever you studied in school. What happens when this doesn't work out though? School does not guarantee anything. Although learning in a college setting and graduating from school is important, education through experience is more effective and will take you farther in life. Janis Dietz approaches this issue from both sides in "The Myth That College and Major Choice Decides Johnny's Future." She makes sure to note that while the importance of college is still well recognized, the debate about whether or not the decision of a college major will decide your career fate. Parents and college counselors are starting to wonder what the best choice is for the students to be successful because the cost of going to school is rising faster than income. Dietz makes the argument that companies are looking for skills that aren't taught in specific majors. She then addresses the other end by stating that students who enter a career that matches their college major are more successful. Not many students accomplish this though, and the ones that do have the determination and mindset that businesses are looking for. It's not the degree; it's the student's personality

and skills acquired from experience that determines what career they get. Although people will argue that getting a college degree is the most important thing you can do, it won't guarantee you anything later in life. These people might say that coming right out of college is the best time to try and get a job because you have just spent at least four years studying in the certain field that you plan to pursue. Spending that much time in one major must mean that you're ready for real work in that field. The problem with this, though, is that many students are now choosing a broad major and end up entering a career that's unrelated to what they studied. For instance, someone could earn a degree in Marine Biology but go on to work in a retail store. A Philosophy graduate could end up working as a carpenter; you never know what's going to happen when you enter the real world outside of college. Schooling, therefore, makes students feel as though they need to major in something that will provide a safe career for them, and that's not what school should be about. Dietz quotes a Harvard-educated "virtual CEO" who had gone from career to career and said, "don't let a career drive you, let passion drive your life" (qtd. in Komisar). This is why it is important for students to experience more than a degree in a specific major. Experience is a word that's often written on resumes and looked for in all job positions, but not all experience can be taught at a four-year school. Many colleges teach communication classes and introductory speech courses, but communication in the work place is more than a speech outline: it is the ability to understand diversity, and that is not taught in books. Skills such as communication are found outside of college and the workspace; it is a trial and error experience that is irreplaceable in the work environment. Dietz

explains, " to be hired for a leadership position, they must of course have good business skills, but that's not enough. The differentiator is whether they are able to lead and manage people, whether they have genuine spark, drive, and enthusiasm...most importantly, they also must have a sense of curiosity" (qtd. in Bisoux). Many graduate programs and businesses look for undergraduates that have something " different. " College does not prepare a student to be different; it teaches them to conform and to be employable. The ability to stand out and be the individual that businesses are looking for is something found through experiencing different social atmospheres, and this is something that can't be taught in the classroom. My dad told a story about this one time that I will never forget. The summer after his freshman year in college, a friend of my dad's from high school told him about an opportunity working in the Southwestern Company. He decided to do it because he thought it'd be good to learn a little bit about sales and being in an actual business, so he went to the headquarters be trained and find out more about what he had to do. They essentially brainwashed the workers, teaching them everything about leadership, being personable, and selling a product. The company then put the kids into groups and sent them to their specific station, my dad's being Florida. Him and his group had to find a place to stay for the next few months because Southwestern didn't provide anything but the basic tools and knowledge they needed about the business. Ten hours a day and six days a week my dad had to go door-to-door selling encyclopedias in the scorching Florida heat. Listening to the story, I couldn't believe that he had gone through with the decision to join the business in the first place. My dad said that looking back at that summer now he wasn't sure

either, but he's glad he did it because it eventually paid off. After four more years of getting average grades, cutting lawn, and waiting tables, he was ready to enter the real world looking for a career. His first interview right out of college was with a business similar to FedEx. At first, in between the general interview questions, they drilled him for having bad grades. But then said " I understand that you've graduated with a Bachelor's, but tell me more about these door-to-door sales you did. If you can sell an encyclopedia at someone's doorstep, you can sell anything. " Ever since that interview he's been making a successful living in sales. It just shows that the opportunities you choose to take advantage of outside of the classroom have more of an impact on your career than what you read inside of it. Businesses are looking for students that stand out among the millions of college graduates every year. If all you can write on an application is a Bachelor's degree and waiting tables, you're going to look very similar to the rest of the applicants. Success shouldn't be measured by whether or not a student earns a degree because the success comes after that. The degree is just a piece of paper that says you passed your classes. What leads to real success is the skills you learn from experience, something not taught in school. Work Cited Dietz, Janis. " The Myth That College and Major Choice Decides Johnny's Future. " College Student Journal 44. 2 (2010): 234-249. Academic Search Premier. Web. 6 Feb. 2013.