

Zinser response essay



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William Zinsser, a former college student, English professor, and headmaster of Branford College depicts the four pressures on a college student in his article "College Pressures". Four different types of pressure stick out the most: economic, parental, peer, and self-induced pressure. The self-induced phobia: where students are certain that all other pupils are working much harder than they are.

Peer pressure: the grade has become the beacon that reflects the journey through college; not intellectual development, or maturing as an individual.

Parental pressure: the students conform to parents' wishes, and watch themselves morph into something they're not, just to live up to expectations.

Economic pressure: it's not unusual for a student, even if he works part-time at college and full-time during the summer, to accrue an immense amount in loans after four years; loans that he/she begins to repay within one year after commencement (pages 121-127).

There are many more sub-pressures below each of Zinsser's four pressures; none more than under "economic pressure." The economy hasn't been helping the cost of tuition recently; college is expensive and costing more every year. Yet FAFSA can't be relied on as much due to the rate of inflation among other factors. Some students are forced to obtain un-subsidized loans from their banks, pressing them to pay before graduation. While Zinsser's four pressures are persistently strong, I believe the most stressful strain on today's college student is the financial pressure.

Throughout my elementary, middle school, and high school years, I never really understood the strain money can put on a person. Living at home, my

mom and dad bought more for me than I ever knew! I honestly possessed a great deal of money – indirectly. I never thought much about my bank account until my college life began. Acquiring my own checking account when I was 18 filled my ignorant head with naive financial security. The day I ventured out of my parents’ nest was the beginning of a downward pecuniary spiral!

I underwent a major modification from the pressure put on my wallet my freshman year. Originally I was completely repulsed by the idea of drawing out loans due to the fact that my parents taught me to avoid them if possible. I did the FAFSA for the aid, just to see what I could get, but never considered accepting it. Ignorantly, I thought I’d be able to pay out-of-pocket my entire college career; I planned on working part-time. However, In just two semesters, I was broke. Suddenly, FAFSA’s aid looked a little less repulsive, and I soon found my transformed self clicking “ accept” on UWGB’s SIS webpage!

FAFSA didn’t come to my rescue the next year; not even a third my costs were covered. Witnessing my account balance reach zero in savings put me in a crunch that increased the anxiety past levels I’ve never experienced before in my life. I was shaking when I was able to pay off fall semester’s tuition cost with only five dollars left in my possession. In this moment, I discovered I was still not ahead. After all, spring’s bill comes shortly after the winter. I had three months to save up a substantial stash and was left to fend for myself.

My entire schedule's focus shifted from succeeding in school, to paying for school. I worked well past forty hours a week at every chance I could. I found myself donating plasma between classes twice a week. I gave up my lunch hour a few times a week to earn twenty bucks trying new foods from a local company. This method worked for paying off the bills, but it wasn't long before my grades fell. Panic gripped me each time I assessed the situation I put myself in. I took my advisor's advice and implemented a plan to swing my schedule's focus back to my classes.

I decided to stick with working no more than forty hours a week, and cut back in other areas. I un-insured my car and parked it in the garage. I motored myself to work/school with my ancient mountain bike; often a total of thirty miles a day rain or shine! I went two months without visiting my parents who were too far to bike! Food cost was reduced by a diet of peanut butter sandwiches, Ramen noodles, and spaghetti. I showered no longer than five minutes a day to keep water costs down. I unplugged the TV, only charged my computer and phone at school, and boiled water in the microwave to keep the electric bill low. These were all hard to live by, but my plan was successful - from an academic standpoint.

I painfully concluded that the only way to afford the monster tuition bill was this: I had to give up important materials. I listed my table, sofa, bed, coffee table, entertainment center, TV, xbox, my lifetime collection of fifty dvds, and dvd player on the net. I had to fight for many prices, but everything went for what I was asking, so I was able to pay the bill in time. The cost was more than I reckoned, but the desperate feeling of uncertainty was gone from within me for the time being!

A cold feeling of horror draped over me once I discovered that once again, though I was in the green after spring semester's tuition check, I didn't emerge ahead much; this time a mere three-hundred dollars. As much as I tried to convince myself that I did the right thing, coming home to an empty apartment after a tough day's work and sleeping on the frigid floor in a sleeping bag, overtook what little will power I possessed. My gloomy mood reflected my materialistic sacrifice; I felt as if I had nothing left to struggle for.

A drastic change occurred when I attempted to shave some monetary pressure off myself by taking a break from school. I assumed spending the duration working would help me achieve enough wealth to never again worry about affording school. Although a year of working full-time didn't get me rich, doing so got me past my lowest point of possessing a car, a few articles of clothing, \$200 cash, and a negative attitude towards college. I've drastically revolutionized my view of school from being something expensive I have to do, to a necessary task I must complete in order to become what I'm capable of.

Though I agree Zinsser's four pressures are significant, for me the most crushing burden is easily the financial pressure. It took much sacrifice for me to put myself through college, but now, I'm ready to reap in the awards. Not only do I have a new outlook on college classes, but I also renewed my commitment to work hard for myself. Money is always a concern for me right now, but I'm hoping my sacrifices will make my college experience more enjoyable someday soon. Though I know the immense fiscal expenditure

known as college is worth the investment ultimately, surviving under the financial weight at this moment is a strenuous challenge.