
The Reasons Taking A Gap Year Is Beneficial

A common misconception in American society nowadays is that education can only occur within the four walls of a classroom. Of course, this is not true. People learn important and valuable things in life every day. Imagine spending a year focusing on your life and learning important things not only about the world but yourself too. Students who take a gap year before college get to experience this. Taking a gap year before college is very beneficial because students develop new life skills, get prepared for college, and experience personal growth.

The first reason why taking a gap year before college is beneficial is that students learn to develop new life skills. For example, taking a year to focus on yourself and those around you can lead to further developing soft skills. Soft skills are skills like motivation, communication, conflict management, and more. These skills are very important to have if you want to get employed and do well at your job. Another life skill that is acquired from taking a gap year is learning a new language or culture. This is mostly developed if you travel abroad during your gap year. You do not have to travel abroad during your gap year, but if you do the opportunity to learn a new language or culture arises, which can then lead to a higher employment chance. According to ef.edu, "Knowing another language is one of the greatest skills to have: It will basically give you superpowers by boosting your brainpower, making you more employable, and boosting your confidence". Finding a hidden passion is another skill acquired from taking a gap year before college. For example, if a student went straight to college and focused on their major right away, they might not have had the chance to explore more options and possibly find a major that suits them better. This is especially helpful with later finances because it lessens the chance of going to college again to change your major due to dissatisfaction from the first. Some might say that a student can develop these skills while attending college, and while that can be true, they will not experience these skills to the fullest. As stated before, they could be too focused to widen their view and explore. Overall, developing new life skills is an important benefit of taking a gap year because soft skills, language fluency, and experience in the real world all make a student more likely to be employed and successful in that position.

The second reason why taking a gap year is beneficial to students is that it gives them time to get prepared for college. Becoming more financially aware can be a result of taking a gap year. Taking time to learn and experience how finances work when living alone can be very beneficial. Instead of going straight to school and having to deal with finances, class, and a job all at once, taking some time to understand finances and saving money can make the transition smoother. Also, taking the time to work a pre-career job can allow a student to save money and be more prepared for college. Another way that taking a gap year can help students become prepared for college is that it provides better academic performance. According to gapyearassociation.org,

"When Clagett controlled for the academic rating and looked at the actual academic performance of students who took a Gap Year compared to their predicted performance based on their academic rating, students who took a gap year almost always overperformed academically in college, usually to a statistically significant degree. Most importantly, the positive effect of taking a gap year was demonstrated to endure over all four years".

Not only did taking a gap year improve academic performance greatly, but it improved over all four years. This is important because improved academic performance leads to being more successful in a future career. Some might argue that they don't need to take a year to improve because they are already satisfied with their academic performance. While that is acceptable, there is always room for improvement, especially if you want a greater chance at employment. Overall, taking a gap year can help prepare students for college by providing experience with financials and improving academic performance greatly.

The third reason why taking a gap year is beneficial to students is that they experience personal growth. Personal growth can mean many different things. For example, a student can experience personal growth from exploring their interests and possibly finding a hidden passion that could ultimately lead to increased job satisfaction. Students who are already set in stone with their dream career can also benefit from a gap year. Taking the time to focus on their interests allows them to reaffirm or reconsider their choice. Again, this lessens the risk of going through college again because of dissatisfaction from a previous major. Taking a gap year before college can also positively affect the mindset of a student. For example, students who have taken a gap year in the past have reported that their happiness has increased drastically. Also, taking a gap year can improve self-confidence, maturity, and independence. According to yearon.com,

“American Gap Association statistics found that 97% of gap year alumni respondents felt their gap year improved their maturity. Gap years activities such as teaching or volunteering abroad are known for pushing students outside of their comfort zone[...]While it may seem intimidating, persevering through gap year adjustments and challenges is an extremely empowering achievement that builds maturity and independence”.

Furthermore, activities that can occur during a gap year improve the mind and skills of students greatly. One might argue that they do not need to explore options or better themselves because they are set in their career. While this can be a valid choice for some students, it is best to be sure of your choice before regretting it in the future. Overall, taking a gap year can be very beneficial to students because they experience personal growth by exploring interests, improving maturity and independence, and gaining confidence that their career decision is the right one.

Some might argue that taking a gap year before college is not beneficial to students because they may not want to come back to school after the year and they might be scared of their GPA dropping which will result in inadequate academic performance. However, studies have shown that most students who plan on attending school the next year follow through with their decision. According to gapyearassociation.org, “90 percent of students who took a gap year returned to college within a year”. Also, it has been proven that change is needed in order to grow. As previously stated, the academic performance of students who took a gap year noticeably improved and a large percentage of students took their academic work more seriously. According to yearoutgroup.org, “Change is essential - variety makes us feel alive, engaged and it helps us grow and learn new things, enabling us to discover more about ourselves and our lives. By giving the brain that well needed change, it has been shown that gap year students are more likely to graduate with a First or Upper Second class honours degree”. All in all, it has been proved by multiple sources and statistics that taking a gap year before college, is in fact, beneficial to students.

In conclusion, students can benefit greatly from taking a gap year for college, despite what some might think. Students can gain opportunities to develop new life skills such as strengthening soft skills, learning a new language and culture, and finding a hidden passion. Students can also gain experience that helps to prepare them for college, like becoming more financially aware and avoiding academic burnout so when they return they are more ready than ever to learn and juggle responsibilities. Lastly, students can be benefited by gaining personal growth by exploring their interests and increasing job satisfaction. To reiterate, students can benefit greatly from taking a gap year before college because they develop new life skills, get prepared for college, and experience personal growth.

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