

Objective: Understanding the terminology of your options beyond high school will help you make better decisions about your 13th year plan.

How to get it done:

With your advisory, read the following information and discuss the different options. Once your discussion is over answer the questions at the end.

Some people are very lucky. They seem to have always known what they want to be: a lawyer, an electrician, an artist. Some students know what they want to do but aren't sure how that translates into a life's work: build things, work outdoors, work with computers, be around music. Then there are some students who haven't a clue about what they want to do or be.

Colleges

Colleges and universities come in all sizes and in a variety of settings. They can be public or private, affiliated with religious groups, or nonsectarian. There are four-year and two-year colleges, and they grant associate and baccalaureate degrees in a variety of subjects.

Community colleges (CCs) are two-year schools, but not all two-year colleges are community colleges. CCs offer a comprehensive range of classes that could lead to a four-year degree or into a career path. An associate's degree from a two-year college can prepare you for a number of jobs that pay well if not better than a four-year degree.

If students are not sure what they want to do or what talents they have, community colleges allow them the freedom to explore different career interests at a low cost. CCs are a great stepping stone because even students who don't have strong grades in high school are admitted to CCs, where they can pull up their grades and transfer out to four-year schools. For those students who can't afford the tuition at a four-year college or university, community colleges let them take their basic classes before transferring to a four-year institution. Other students get associate's degrees from community colleges because of the lower cost of overall tuition as well as living expenses. They live at home while getting a degree.

Vocational Schools & Career Colleges

Career colleges may also be two-year or four-year colleges, but many career colleges and vocational schools list their courses in terms of credit hours rather than years. Vocational and career colleges are public or private and provide specific job training. Different states have different names for these educational institutions -tech prep schools, technical institutions, vocational/business schools, and career colleges.

In general, these schools prepare students for a specific career. Some schools require academic courses such as English or history. Others relate every class to a specific job, such as computer-aided drafting. There can be a negative side to this course of study if a student hasn't carefully researched what he/

she wants to specialize in. It's important that you do your research and carefully weigh your skills and interests against a particular career before you decide to enroll in a vocational and career college.

Trade Programs

Majors in trade specialties are as straight forward as they are diverse. For the most part, graduates of a particular trade school go on to practice that trade. Although for most vocational positions, an associate degree is sufficient to start in the field, some jobs might require further study or some kind of licensing or certification. Sometimes this special licensing can be obtained through a college program or through a program run by an employer, an association, or a union. In addition, a period of apprenticeship must be served for most trade specialties before a worker can practice independently.

This is another instance when researching the possibilities is important, before you sign up for a course of study that will take you in a particular direction.

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship provides structured on-the-job training under the supervision of a qualified craftsman, technician, or professional. This training is supplemented by related classroom instruction conducted either by the sponsor or by an educational institution. There are 853 occupations that are listed as appropriate for apprentice programs by the US Bureau of Apprenticeship and state apprenticeship registration agencies. Generally, apprenticeships are available if the occupation is common in industry and able to be taught in a series of sequential learning experience accompanied by a program of related instruction. For example, to become an electrician, a person serves an apprenticeship.

Military

Joining the military is another option after high school. There are three ways to serve in the military: enlist, join the Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) while in college, and/or be accepted into one of the four military academies. The latter is very competitive.

If you enlist, you will be assigned training and then a job in a skill or trade that may be useful later in civilian life. All five branches of the military offer college courses to enlisted personnel on their bases. Enlistees may also take college courses at nearby civilian colleges.

Enrolling in ROTC is one way to receive financial aid without building a mountain of debt after college. In return for a tuition scholarship and monthly allowance, ROTC candidates enter the service as officers after college and serve a four-year tour of duty. They are then eligible to receive the benefits of the G.I. Bill for graduate study.

Work

Some students go right from high school to work. Today, without some kind of specialized training, the long-term wage outlook is not good for high school graduates. That's why we've spent so much time describing different ways to get training after high school. Today, employers are looking for employees who can solve problems, take initiative, think critically, work well in teams, and constantly learn on the job. They want people who deal well with customers and who present a pleasant and informed image to the public.

One last thing to remember about life after high school

Whatever choice you make now, you're not locked into it for life. Sometimes, a person joins the military after high school because the military will pay for education and the person can be trained in the skills he/she wants to practice in civilian life. Going to work right after high school for a couple of years in order to save money to go to college full-time works for someone who doesn't want to be in debt for ten years to repay student loans. Sometimes the only way someone can afford higher education is to work full-time and go to school part-time. No one way works for everyone, but don't shut down all discussion of further education until you look at the variety of jobs that are available and that might interest you.

8 Reasons to Continue your Education

There are many ways besides traditional four-year college degree to continue your education after high school. Before you say "NO" think about the following list.

1. You can fulfill a dream -or begin one. Some people have a special desire to do or become something. Continuing their education provides the opportunity to make that wish come true.
2. You can make connections that link you to future jobs. The teachers, supervisors, and classmates you meet after high school will provide valuable ties to future jobs & also for associations and committees in your work life.
3. You can meet new people. You will widen your circle of friends and, chances are, form long-lasting friendships.
4. You can do what you love and get paid. When you combine education and training with the right job, work becomes more like play because you really know what you are doing and how it all fits together. Your work becomes far more satisfying and rewarding.
5. You can exercise your mind. No matter what your area of interest, education and training hold the key to the most interesting and challenging information you can imagine. Become a lifelong learner.
6. You can learn critical thinking and analytical skills. Furthering your learning will help you to develop the habits of mind necessary to think critically and analyze information. These are not abstract to a plumber faced with diagnosing a leak or an administrative assistant trying to devise a spreadsheet program to capture monthly expenses.
7. You won't be left behind. In your working lifetime you will need to be prepared to change jobs and continually learn new skills in order to keep up with the changes in industry, communications, and technology. Education will give you a solid background in how to learn.
8. You can earn more money. In general, the more education and training you have, the more money you will make.

8 NON-Reasons to Continue your Education

You may say, "Forget the reasons why I should continue my education. I can't because..." Let's see if your objections stand up to this list

1. Nobody in my family has ever gone to college. Being the first person in your family to approach the college search and selections process may mean that you will need to rely on your counselor for help.
2. My grades aren't good enough (from Stanford to Grays Harbor CC). Different institutions have different requirements, including grades they accept. You can find this out by searching schools through College Quest and Best College Picks. Schools also evaluate students for admission as a whole person, looking at things such as participation in extracurricular activities; talents, such as academics, athletics, and music; employment record; and volunteer history. Many schools also have classes that incoming freshmen can take to improve skills in reading, math, and studying.
3. I can't afford it (from Stanford to Grays Harbor). Many families can't. That's why there are so many opportunities for financial aid, scholarships, grants, and work-study programs. Federal, state, school-sponsored, private, and career-specific financial aid resources, including student and parental loans, are available to students who take the time to look. It may be necessary to patch enough money to meet the costs of higher education. Talk with your counselor to find out how to find the right resources.
4. I don't know how to apply or where I want to go. The counseling center has a directory of post secondary-training facilities. Make an appointment.

5. I think it may be too hard for me. Think back to something you have done in your life that seemed too difficult in the beginning. Didn't you find that once you began, and stuck with it, you succeeded? Once you choose a post secondary-training option based on your interests and skills, you'll probably find school isn't so hard after all.
6. I'm not sure I'll fit in. One of the best things about furthering your education is the chance to meet new people and be part of new experiences in new surroundings. Continuing education options attract a wide variety of students from many different backgrounds. Doing careful research including visiting the campuses can help you determine which school is right for you.
7. I don't know what I want to do with my life. Many students don't know this about themselves until they get to experience some of the possibilities. The Project Me curriculum has been set up for you to complete a self-assessment each year that will focus on your interests, talents and skills. The results will provide you with a base with which to plan your future.
8. There is no way I can pursue my education full-time. Part-time students are becoming the norm. A recent study determined that 43% of undergraduate students attend school part-time. Many offer work-study opportunities to help student pay for their education.

Answer the following questions.

1. What are three things you learned in this article that you did not know?
2. What is the difference between a 2-year community college and a 2-year vocational college?
3. What are three ways to enlist in the military?
4. What is the difference between an associate degree and a bachelors degree? (you may need to research aside from this article)
5. Match the career with the appropriate degree/training.

Electrician	Associate Degree
Teacher	Bachelor Degree
Infantry Officer	Trade Certificate
Automotive Technician	Apprenticeship
Dental Hygienist	Military Career