

The shift from High School to College

School presents a lot of challenges to the aspiring student to overcome. On top of the numerous assignments the student must stay on top of in order to come out of the semester with passing grades, the student must also be able to squeeze in time for social and extracurricular activities. The constant stress of all of the management of time, money, and work really throws the young student into the tough world of responsibility.

In high school, the student is accustomed to having his classes occur in a predictable, daily routine where the classes take place in sequential order at the exact same time throughout the week. The homework, for the most part, is laid out in clear, monotonous structure; most of it is simply busy work. In college, however, the homework becomes more complex, forcing the student to think more in a more open-ended method to figure things out on his own.

The schedules, too, drastically change. Classes do not occur on a rigid day-to-day sequence, but instead are stretched out over the week, allowing more free time in between classes. The freedom of time does, however, mean more responsibility for the student to keep up with. Homework and projects come in on a steady flow, allowing for more flexibility for when the homework can be completed, but also can slip by students who procrastinate or don’t keep on top of the assignments.

On top of the accruement of tasks and responsibilities, the student must also learn to open his mind to confront ideas, lifestyles, and philosophies that conflict with his own. The college campus is a huge expansion of people from the high school, which usually only keeps a few hundred people at a time. With the mixture of people from varying cultures and beliefs, this forces the student who may be stuck in a closed-minded handicap to learn to understand things that he may not agree with.

The social landscape from high school also completely shifts. In high school, it is fairly easy to maintain a clique that stays with each other in between classes and after classes. It is more difficult to do so in college, as everyone may be on different schedules and the campus is much less compact; it is definitely possible to maintain close social groups, but it requires much more effort on the part of the friends. But the sheer variety of students and extracurricular groups does open opportunity for the student to make new friends, if they can overcome any social fears of being lost among the crowd.

But the most stressful aspect of college, in my opinion, is the ever-looming dread that the student feels concerning what career he wishes to take. A college student changes his major three times on average, which means that for the most part, no one is really sure what they want to do with their lives when they arrive to college. The student must make decisions involving: money, education requirements, work environment, and personal passion in order to finally settle on the path that he wishes to pursue.

All in all, college is a big step to walk, but although things drastically change and become more and more difficult, the experience leaves a person more intellectually wholesome and mature.