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If a Change Is Needed

Should You Drop Out a Year?

by Joan Kelleher

"SHALL I stay out of school next quarter?" Perhaps you have asked yourself this question. Perhaps you are wondering right now just what you should do.

If an opportunity to gain practical knowledge in your field is presented to you, should you pass it up, in order that you might graduate sooner? True, if you do stick it out for 4 years, you'll probably get your diploma and a position in your major field. You feel that you will be young enough to get a good start on your career before you marry. You can start with one company and work up to what you wish to become in a shorter period of time.

But now look at the other side. If you take a quarter out here and there you gain a practical, working knowledge of your field. You come back to your classes with a new interest and a desire to complete the knowledge that your work has made you feel you needed. You may have developed a special interest in that particular field.

Dorothy Crawford, institution management junior, found a position in a field related to her major. She worked as a home economist in a department store in Pittsburgh. It was her job to demonstrate home appliances which were being promoted by the store.

"Each distributor taught me about the appliances from the bottom up," she says. Her position gave her contacts with many home economists and distributors of home appliances. She had several positions offered her following graduation.

Changed Outlook

Dorothy feels that, rather than to look for a job in your own field, perhaps it is better to get one in a related field of home economics to broaden your general knowledge. She also feels that her outlook has changed after working. She now has a goal, for she knows what the business world wants.

Maybe you have found a job opportunity that is not in your major field, maybe not even remotely related to it. Should you drop out of school in this case?

If the position offers travel, the opportunity to see things you haven't seen, and a chance to get better acquainted with the world and how it works, why not try it? You may be a quarter or two behind, but it is worth it if you gain a year's worth in experience. You will have the experience of meeting people, of working under a superior, of supporting yourself and learning how to handle your own money. You will learn the difference between an assignment by a professor and an assignment by an employer. The responsibility you feel toward your employer for your

pay check is far greater than the responsibility you feel toward your parents for the grades you earn in school.

One problem you may think about is the chance that you may lose interest in completing your education. You may feel that if you got a job and became quite settled in it you would no longer want to complete your course. However, if your interest is a strong one, you will probably realize shortly the inadequacies of your education. Your desire to complete your course may become much stronger than when you were in school.

Adjustment Problems

Will the adjustment you have to make when you come back to school be a difficult one? This will depend largely on how long you stay out of school. You will notice very little change if you stay out only one quarter. With an increased length of time the adjustment may become more difficult.

Lucille Linge, home economics senior, attended Eastern State Normal College, Madison, S. D., for 1 year, 5 years after she graduated from high school, then taught for 2 years before she entered the United States Marine Corps. In June, 1946, she came to Iowa State. She has found a group of older friends in the dormitory, and reports that she has had no trouble readjusting to studying. She also found that her teaching experience had made her more tolerant and receptive to her professors' methods of teaching.

Maturity gained through job experience cannot be measured in dollars and cents. A new attitude toward your subjects may be invaluable to you. If you feel in a rut and decide to leave school, you may find, upon your return, that an old subject looks new because you can apply it to your experiences. An "I don't care" or "I'll never use anything I learn in this course" attitude may be exchanged for a desire to learn everything you can about everything you see. Meeting people who know facts about things far away from your realm of study gives you a desire to learn more of the general way in which thinking people live and learn.

Another aspect of working is the money earned. Some positions may prove more lucrative than others. Perhaps you may be able to save enough to pay part of your expenses when you come back to school. A feeling of financial independence is a great boost to the morale.

You'll develop a feeling that what you get out of school is really yours, to sell, yours to make the most of. So if you've lost the old fight and if the spirit is no longer there, perhaps a change of scenery would be a step in the right direction.