

## Why College is Important to Me

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With his sunken eyes and cloudy pupils, I came face to face with the cold, harsh truth: my child was dying in front of my eyes. As I carefully examined for any anomalies, I noticed a little green and brown residue gathering on the bottom: algae.

But how could that be? I have followed every step in the Aquarium Fish Survival Manual: cycling the aquarium, monitoring the temperature, and filtering the water. Yet, my pet fish is still struggling to swim and floating upside down. Even after trying every advice from the manual, the algae doubles in size with each passing day.

So I tossed away the book and resorted to my observations. The filter? Check. The temperature? Check. The food?

Oh.

Floating debris covered the surface of the water like a blanket. Even though I had regularly filtered and cycled the fish tank, I had overfed my fish, which left behind food pieces that the fish was too full to consume. The nutrients eventually accumulated and encouraged rapid algal growth, resulting in high pH levels and low sunlight.

After discovering the problem, I immediately cut back on how much food I put in the fish tank. If my fish didn't finish eating the food within 5 minutes, then I reduced the amount for tomorrow. Slowly, my fish returned to his original health.

However, the manual didn't save my fish. Instead, I learned that my observations spoke ten times louder than any book, which is why college is so important to me. College can supplement the standard, textbooks-oriented curriculum with an experiments-driven classroom. In addition to academics, college can teach me how to be independent, how to overcome failure,

and how to amend relationships. No textbooks can explain these social lessons. At college, I can pursue personal growth by exploring new classes and activities that push me out of my comfort zone. Furthermore, I can also meet a diverse community of unique cultures and backgrounds. Instead of examining and stubbornly defending an issue from only one angle, these insights can teach me to embrace diverse viewpoints and develop an open mind.

College will present me with countless opportunities and it's ultimately up to me to determine my own path through the maze. With the help of professors and research programs, I will discover who I am and what my passion in life is. At the same time, I realize that I am in my late teens and that it's okay to not have a step by step plan for my life yet. Success in life arrives unexpectedly, never as planned. Even if life gives me lemons, I don't always have to make lemonade. I can make lemon cake, lemon tarts, and lemon pudding.

After all, nothing is black and white. The world is constantly changing, so I will live my life exploring the ambiguity and richness behind the shades of gray.