

## College, Is It A Good Choice?

Kristyn Hipp, Senior

As you should all know, every senior in Lyons High School is required to successfully complete the Benchmark project in order to graduate. I chose to do my Benchmark on the advantages of college. I chose this topic because I plan on attending college next year, and I was interested in what benefits I would enjoy as a college graduate. It was surprising to me how many advantages there really are to attending college. My research showed me that college graduates enjoy many benefits, other than financial prosperity, that high school graduates do not. I now firmly believe that going to college after high school greatly increases a person's chance of being successful in life because as a college graduate, they'll be better off financially, they will have more job opportunities and they will have other increased benefits.

The lifetime earnings of college graduates are almost two times greater compared to high school graduates. Through a comparison of college expenses and earning power, I proved that college is worth the expense in the long run. College is also beneficial because of the increased job opportunities that college graduates have. College graduates have more job opportunities than high school graduates because they are more skilled. Employers are more eager to higher people who have extended knowledge of the skills needed to perform the job. A college education also provides more personal benefits. These personal benefits include factors, such as health, moral virtue, and even the improved life for the offspring of college graduates.

When I first began my Benchmark project, I thought that it was a stupid requirement that would just create more work for me. However, as I worked on the Benchmark, I discovered that I actually enjoyed researching the topic and was genuinely interested in the information I was finding. I now believe that the Benchmark project is a worth-while assignment that really taught me a lot. My advice to students who will have to do the Benchmark in future years is to choose a topic that is personal to them or that they find very interesting. I believe that this makes a huge difference in whether the student will enjoy the Benchmark or dread it.

## The Benefits of Virtual Reality

Shawn De Wolf, Senior

The ability to walk through a world of animation, feeling, hearing, and interacting with objects that you think are real, now, that is Virtual Reality. Virtual Reality is one of those features that isn't necessary but only helpful in the greatest ways. An analysis of Virtual Reality reveals three fields of use: military, medical, and construction and/or engineering. There are three different forms of VR.

Virtual Reality isn't just a helmet, fake guns and sensors. VR is 3-D graphics. Immersion is the first type of VR. Immersion is immersing or entering a world both real and imaginary. Desktop VR is what you use in CAD classes, constructing buildings and bridges using computer. Third person is your average flight simulator. You have control over an object but are viewing it from a third person view. The Military can use VR in many different ways.

In the past the military has used VR for training soldiers for combat. Computer games have a lot

## Success and the Teenage Mom

Mary Clack, Senior

Everyday at least 60,000 babies are born throughout the United States; more than 45,000 are born to teenage mothers. For the most part, teenage pregnancies are always viewed as negative, but there are always two sides to every issue.

There are teen mothers who do decide to keep their babies and stay in school and finish. A lot of teen mothers are successful in life, and they work hard to get what they have, none of which is recognized. Teen mothers are always more than likely looked down upon or viewed as a disgrace. All people make mistakes in life, and no one is perfect. But there is hope in everyone, and if you strive for the best, then you can be successful. Just because you endure teenage pregnancy during your high school years, doesn't mean your life is over.

My message to all teenage mothers is to always keep a positive mind and don't ever let anyone categorize you or put you down. You do not have to let the image society has on you restrain you in any way. My name is my Mary Clack; I'm seventeen years old and currently a senior at Lyons Junior/ Senior High School. I had my first son at age fourteen and my second son at age sixteen. I'm not ashamed of my kids or of myself. There were times I didn't think I would have made it this far, but I did. It took a lot of hard work, determination, and self-discipline. Yeah, I survived the small town gossip and never let it get the best of me. My struggles only made me a better person and stronger. I will be graduating in June of 2006, and shortly after I will be attending college to be a forensic nurse.

Never dwell in the past, and always live life to the fullest and make the best of every situation whether it's good or bad. The most important thing to remember is when life gets rough, never give up because in the end it will be a great reward.

### Virtual Reality , Cont'd

to do with training soldiers and recruiting new soldiers as well. Many of you know the games *Day of Defeat*, *Call of Duty*, *Counter Strike*, etc. Such games give a sense of what the military might be like in combat scenery. VR can be used to fly unmanned aircrafts as well. The advantage of unmanned aircrafts is to limit casualties. Unmanned aircrafts are primarily used for spying. Artificial Reality, another name for Virtual Reality, can be used in the medical field as well.

Surgeons using VR have the ability to do surgery on a patient half way across the world. The surgeons use a mechanism that holds the medical tools appropriate for the procedure. The movement of their hands sends signals through satellites and computers in order to move the robotic arms at the site of the operation. This technology is expensive. Also expensive is the use of VR in the construction industry.

A prototype can be expensive if you design it and throw it away. Computers give you the ability to design your prototype in 3-D form, so you can view it and change it. VR gives designers the ability to look at the outside as well as the inside. Programs usually simulate week spots in your design, so you can tell what you want improved.

An analysis of Virtual Reality reveals three fields of use: military, medical, and construction and/or engineering. Virtual Reality is more than just fun; it is a tool. Now go take a walk through a virtual world and see how many ways it helps the society.

## Reading Advantages School and Workplace

Craig Elliott, Senior

Have you ever wondered if you could enhance your vocabulary or learning skills? Many people have trouble with vocabulary or with grammar. But why would individuals need to enhance their skills during or after school?

If you have a job that you have to write in, then you may want to have an enhanced your reading comprehension. According to Butler, author of *Towards A Reading-Writing Classroom*, an increase in comprehension will allow readers to learn how to write better. This could help the journalists or other office writers to write with an appropriate grammar and vocabulary. But has there ever been an increase in income through reading?

One day, Brian Tracy, a leading authority on the development of human potential and personal effectiveness, was talking to a college student who wanted to increase his income but without having to enhance his reading. Brian Tracy knew that reading was an easy way to enhance income. Brian said to the young man, "*You need to learn to read and read well...otherwise you'll end up staying in a low-income job.*" The young man would take the advice of Brian Tracy and try to enhance his reading. Within a few years the young man went from a waiter at a local diner to a highly paid biomedical technician with company benefits and a company car. This young man went from earning \$22,000 per year to \$50,000 per year within a seven-year period. Reading and dedication was the key to success for this man. Does starting to read in school have a big affect on your life?

Many individuals may find that it is helpful to start reading in school. There are many types of readers in the world. A proficient reader has the ability to understand what they read and determine if the information they read is usable (Butler 12). This means that the readers can pick out parts of the book that they read and are able to form strong arguments or details that can prove the point of the writer. But there are some who have trouble trying to keep up with their reading level.

According to Boyles, a journalist for WebMD, an award-winning website, "75% of kids leaving 3<sup>rd</sup> grade below reading level struggle their whole lives." Since reading is important for jobs, these individuals may end up having trouble getting into high-income jobs.

Reading is a big part of life and students should read as much as possible. Reading will help them achieve in school and in the work place.

**Animals...continued**

1. Can you afford the animal? - Most pets cost quite a bit, including spaying/neutering, food, vet, etc. Most pets live for at least ten years.
2. Are you ready for the responsibility? - Pets take up quite a bit of the owner's time. Pets must be exercised, fed, trained, etc. Who will watch it while you're on vacation?
3. Are you buying the pet for the right reasons? - It was cute, pet now baby later test, teach a child responsibility are some reasons people buy pets.

Before you go out and purchase yourself an animal, please be sure to thoughtfully consider these three questions. This will ensure that you are doing the right thing before you go and ruin an innocent animal's life.

Don't forget, animals are human too!