

Consider a two-year college

You're on the last leg of your high school education about to head out on your own and take on the world. One of the most important decisions facing you is your education and career plans.

You can be a clothing designer, a lawyer, a doctor, a restaurateur, a veterinarian, a chef, an elementary school teacher—the possibilities are endless. The first step, after thinking about the careers you may want to pursue, is deciding what kind of training and education you will need to achieve those goals.

Let's begin by defining some of the educational options available to you:

Community college

Those who go to community college obtain a general academic education that can help you get all your core courses out of the way and prepare you for a four-year school with a specific major. This education typically takes two years and can provide you with a solid base of academic knowledge that you can then apply to a number of different career paths. So if you don't know what you want to do when you grow up, that's OK. You can check out classes that sound interesting and find out if the career suits you.

Technical school

Technical school, sometimes also referred to as vocational school, is almost the complete opposite of college. Rather than

receiving a generalized education, students who enroll in a course of study at a technical school take very specific classes that prepare them for a particular job (for example: culinary arts, massage therapy, office management, cosmetology, fashion design, or information technology). Although vocational classes are typically found in community colleges, there are also a large number of technical institutes that provide this kind of training.

There is no "best" or "worst" choice. Each one of these educational possibilities has advantages and disadvantages that you must carefully consider. In order to determine which path is the right one for you, you must first consider what you want your career path to be, and what you must do to get there.

Keep a few things in mind:

1 If you're not sure about what you want to do for a living, or which career you'd like to pursue, community college may be the best option. This is because a community college allows you to "try on" different disciplines and see which one fits best.

2 If you know exactly what you want to do, perhaps a technical school is the right choice. This is particularly true if the career you're interested in requires hands-on technical knowledge and experience. One of the great aspects about a technical school is the amount of practical

experience you will obtain during your course of study, which will directly translate to the job.

3 What if you're not sure about what you want to do? Some of you may already know exactly which career path you want to pursue. However, if you don't know, don't worry — you're not alone! It may take a while for you to decide and that's OK. Talk to your parents, friends, teachers and counselors, and tell them about some of the career choices you're considering or ask them for suggestions.

Taking some time to really think about what you want to do and what will make you happy is just as important as deciding where you'll go to make your dreams happen.

Excerpted from article "What school is right for you" by Anne Chaconas.

NOTES: _____

Find your match

Get matched up with your perfect college at **NextStepU.com/Match**

