**Once and Now Essay**

I was once carefree. I was as carefree as one could be, no stress, no responsibilities and full of energy. I would come back from school and then go out with friends again. We would play out all evening, either football, cricket or basketball. When I got back home, I would fire up my Computer and play video games till midnight. But even with all this playing around, I did not do badly at school. I would study for my class tests 1 day prior and still get decent grades.

Every day I would follow the same routine: school, friends, computer. This computer system was gifted to me by my parents on my 16th birthday, it was not a powerful machine capable of running the latest games but it could run all of my favourite ones. I also bought a backlit gaming keyboard with all the fancy coloured lights, which i found very cool at that time, to go along with it. Even though it was very unhealthy for me, I spent several hours on it every day, playing games and chatting with my friends. I remember once I twisted my ankle pretty bad playing football. We then had to go to the hospital to get it X-rayed, fortunately it was only a sprain but I was told to stay home and rest for a week. That week I did nothing except play video games on my computer all day long. Then came time for my O-level exams and I had to reduce my game time for a month but the day my papers ended I was back on my hours long computer sessions.

Now that I have started my A-levels, I have found the transition from O-levels to A quite demanding and as a result I have found myself with less and less time for my extra activities. Studies were more burdensome so I had to reduce the time I spent hanging out with my friends. I hardly ever got the time to play games on my computer, instead I started using my computer for research, gathering information, and doing assignments. And as for sports, I still managed to make time for it but decided to focus solely on football because that is what I figured I enjoyed the most. At school everything was just so much easier, I knew all the other students, had good relations with the teachers and the studies were relatively easier. Now in college I started off with only 2 friends who I knew from school but as time went on I made some friends with similar interests who got I along very well with.

Being the oldest out of 3 siblings and the only brother, my parents always expected me to be more responsible, but growing up I wasn’t ready to take any form of responsibility. Since I’ve started college, I have changed a lot and grown immensely as a person, multitasking my extracurricular activities and academics has improved my time management skills to a great extent but it has also been very exhausting for me. College has also made me more responsible, helping with house chores, meeting college deadlines and balancing social life with studies.

Using the computer for gathering information as well as for my entertainment has allowed me to increase my understanding on a plethora of subjects, especially computer systems which got me fascinated in its working and ultimately led me to pursue Computer Sciences as a career. Throughout this journey I have realized that this machine is not just for playing games but much more useful when utilized as a source of knowledge. I still play games on it every once in a while in my free time and reminisce those carefree days when life was easier and everything was just fun and games. I am still in the process of growing and learning, from all my experiences and all my mistakes.

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