**Research Question**

What are the benefits for graduating seniors who take a gap year before their first year in college to engage in national service?

**Research Outline**

Thesis: Although most traditional students enter college immediately after graduating from high school, there are many potential benefits of taking a gap year to engage in national service.

Topic Sentence 1: From a developmental psychology perspective, the gap year would be useful for students who feel overburdened by choosing a major too early, who need time to renew focus toward academic studies, and who would gain maturity by spending time in a professional environment.

Topic Sentence 2: From an ethical perspective, a year devoted to national service would do wonders in terms of providing students with valuable experience, putting them in positions of leadership, and empowering them to claim their education when they ultimately enter college.

Topic Sentence 3: From an economic perspective, students who use a gap year for national service could qualify for additional grants and scholarships, receive college credits, and increase their ability to graduate in four years.

Working Conclusion: We are learning that there is no “one-size-fits-all approach” to education, and it appears that there are many students who do benefit from taking a gap year before entering college. It also seems that there are many opportunities for a gap year to become a structured way to assist students who need maturity, financial assistance, or simply time to reset before entering college.

**References**

American Gap Association. (2017). Gap year data. http://www.americangap.org/

Clagett, B. (2013, March 20). Bob Clagett on taking a gap year.

http://collegeadmissionbook.com/blog/bob-clagett-taking-gap-year

Corporation for National and Community Service. (2017). AmeriCorps programs 2017. https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/current-members /americorps-week/americorps-week-2017

Hoe, N. (2015). American Gap Association national alumni survey report. http://americangap.org/assets/2015%20NAS%20Report.pdf

Koeppel, D. (2004, December 5). Choosing a college major: For love or for the money? *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/

Snider, S. (2014, July 30). Get money or college credit for a gap year. *U.S. News & World Report.* https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/paying-for

-college/articles/2014/07/30/get-money-or-college-credit-for-a-gap-year

Thinking Beyond Borders. (2016). Why choose TBB, the global leader in gap year programs. https://thinkingbeyondborders.org/programs-for-gap-year-students/why

-choose-tbb-gap-year-programs/

Warren Wilson College. (2017). Scholarships for first year students.

http://www.warren-wilson.edu/admission/afford/scholarships-grants