**Yes, a College Degree Is Still Worth It**

Amanda Halverson

I have mixed, and in this setting, possibly unpopular, feelings about college degrees. I do believe that skills are much more important than credentials in most careers. However, in some situations, the credentials are the only way you can prove you have the skills, such as job interviews. I think there are many careers that would be done better in trade schools. I have also had many jobs that provided on-the-job training, however, I do see that even then, employees with degrees are more likely to be paid better. Also, if you want to do a job that requires such a depth of knowledge that on-the-job training just isn’t feasible, obviously you have to go to school. That’s what I ran into. I got a job helping with a data migration and fell in love with the process, so when my contract was over at the end of the project, I looked for data migration jobs. I learned that every single employer required a bachelor’s degree. I also realized that without that degree on my resume, the AI kicked it before a person saw it. Those employers weren’t even seeing my resume, so my past experience didn’t matter. After looking into it further, I saw they also required skills that I do not have and would have a difficult time teaching myself.

It makes sense to me that “foundational skills—the bedrock of a liberal arts education—sometimes pay off even more than technical capabilities (Selingo & Sigelman, 2023).” The knowledge I will receive in the technical part of my education will be valuable, but my life experiences and this fresh start in liberal arts will also be a benefit to me and my employer.

I agree that what a student knows and how ready they are to jump into a job should be far more important to employers than merely a piece of paper saying they managed to go to school for 2 or more years. The degree itself does not guarantee that the graduating student did well in the courses or understands everything they were taught. More importantly, it does not mean what they learned in school will be useful in their job. The degree-to-job system needs an upgrade, and I’m glad to see schools are beginning to work on it.

Reference

Selingo, J., & Sigelman, M. (2023, May 20). *Yes, a College Degree Is Still Worth It*. WSJ; The Wall Street Journal. https://www.wsj.com/lifestyle/careers/yes-a-college-degree-is-still-worth-it-6a7bfe7b‌

Response to Noah Collins

How frustrating for your uncle. I absolutely agree with you that immersion in your chosen field is vital. The cost of each college credit at CWI is $109 more than at the college I went to 30 years ago. I can't imagine going through a whole four-year degree and then almost immediately having to do it again from necessity. If people could get some experience in the career they think they want before they finish their associates, that would save a lot of time, money, and stress.

Response to Cynthia Gorena

I’m in the same boat, coming back to school for a specific degree. I have moved too many times to stay in one industry in the past, but in all of my jobs, I did just fine without a degree. I did see those with degrees making more money, which was frustrating when they definitely were not doing as much work as I was, or as well. However, for the career I want now, I have to have a great deal more knowledge than I have, so I see the value in getting a structured education to pair with my previous experience.