

badge of honor" because individuals are more freethinking and risk-taking. Proponents of degrees counter with data that the educated earn far more in their lifetimes than those without degrees, and thus the Zuckerbergs and the Gateses of the world are the exception, rather than the norm. They also argue that an education derived solely from virtual classrooms would be devoid of the interpersonal experience and critical thinking that take place in more traditional classrooms. Although deciding higher education may simply be the current fashion, it is likely that changes in higher education are on the horizon, and definitions of "level of education" may be altered as a result of those changes.¹⁶

Grade Point Average. Classroom grades are measured using a grade point average (GPA). Care should be exercised in the interpretation of GPA information. For example, a GPA in one's major in college may be different (usually higher) from one's GPA for all classes. Grades also vary widely by field (e.g., grades in engineering tend to be lower than in other fields). Further, a GPA of 3.5 may be good at one school but not at another. Research suggests that the validity of GPA in predicting job performance may be as high as the mid .30s. College grades are no more valid than high school grades, and grades are most valid in predicting early job performance. Although there is variability from employer to employer, evidence indicates that GPA does not play a large role in most recruiters' evaluations. GPAs tend to have adverse impact against minorities, and, as with all selection measures with adverse impact, the validity evidence must be balanced against adverse impact implications.¹⁷

Quality of School. Much has been said and written about the quality of various educational programs. For example, *U.S. News and World Report* annually publishes the results of a survey showing ratings of school quality (or prestige) depending on the faith you have in such ratings.¹⁸

Graduates from prestigious universities are commanding wage premiums for MBA degrees in particular, but also educational degrees in general. Sixty percent of corporate recruiters cite the reputation of the school as the top reason for recruiting at a particular university. As one article concluded, "It's not necessarily where you learn in an MBA program, but where you learn it."¹⁹

Major Field of Study. The more specialized the knowledge requirements of a particular position, the more important an applicant's major field of study is likely to be as a predictor. An English major may do very well as an editor but may be unsuccessful as a physician. It should also be noted that choice of major does not guarantee that a certain number or type of classes have been taken. The number and type of classes needed for a major or minor vary from school to school and need to be carefully scrutinized to ensure comparability across majors. The relationship between field of study and job performance is very difficult to assess; therefore, no conclusive validity evidence is available.