Educational Technology Skills: Career Pathways and Perceptions among Hartford Program Participants

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Guest Evaluator: Jim Trostle (Anthropology)
Research Question

What career paths have graduates from a Hartford adult education computer training program followed and do they believe the program provided them with marketable computer skills?
My thesis argues that although the program provided marketable computer skills, most students were either unemployed or working in the same types of unskilled jobs that they had before enrolling in the program with a few exceptions.
Programs

- **Youth - Business Computer Skills Training (BCST)**
  - Target Population 16-21 year old youth
  - GED component (if needed)
  - Business English & Life Skills
  - Computer Skills: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)

- **ESL & Basic Computer Skills**
  - Targeted non-English Speaking Students (Spanish)
  - Focused on ESL skills: Conversational English, Writing and Grammar
  - Basic Computer Skills

- **BCST**
  - Targeted individuals referred by Agencies (no age limit)
  - Business English & Life Skills
  - Computer Skills: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
Significance

- Funding
- Additional Evaluation Tool
- Improvement of Programs
Methodology

- **Primary Sources:**
  - Staff from Hartford Education Computer Training Program (Pseudonym used for Agency Name)
  - Participants of Programs
    - Personal Interviews
    - Snowball Sampling
    - Phone Interview

- **Secondary Sources:**
  - Department of Labor ([http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/glan/glanarun.htm](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/glan/glanarun.htm))
# Breakdown of Program Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Wrong No., Not in Service, No Answer, Moved</th>
<th>Actual Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Five BCST</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL/BCST</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>28, 7 unreachable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCST</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpretation of Findings

- All participants believed that the program helped them become more marketable in the work force. (All names are pseudonyms for confidentiality.)
  - Prior to the program Vanessa worked as a florist clerk. She is now a customer service rep for Bob’s Discount Furniture.

Vanessa said, “Both my part time job and this program help me get my job at Bob’s. The job required me to have customer service and computer skills. If I didn’t take this program I wouldn’t have gotten the job.”
Interpretation of Findings (cont’d)

Abby was a pizza maker prior to enrolling in the program. The day after graduation from high school, she started working at Harte Nisson. For a few weeks, she worked at the car dealer and finished the program.

Abby states, “It helped a lot. I mean you look at where I’m working now at Harte Nisson as an Off-Lease Coordinator. It’s completely different to making pizza.”
Interpretation of Findings (cont’d)

- 3 of 9 Participants currently employed in better jobs than what they had prior to the program
  - Abby
  - Vanessa
  - Destiny

- 2 of 3 lived with supportive parents
- 1 of 3 relocated & came prepared with a job
6 of 9 Participants currently are employed in the same types of jobs from food service, retail and cleaning

- Ashley, Jalyssa, Amber
- Jessie, Jennifer, Felicia

- 6 of 6 young single moms
- Needed to work to support family
- Limited time left on State assistance
Additional Research Options

- In my opinion, further research could be done on this program’s effectiveness.
- You could research each program individually. For example, the Youth – BCST population are primarily high school dropouts. One could investigate closer their progress, perceptions and career goals.