

2008

Career Placement of Graduates Who Received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Training Specialist

LaTrey E. Myrick
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Myrick, LaTrey E., "Career Placement of Graduates Who Received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Training Specialist" (2008). *OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers*. 90.
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects/90

This Master's Project is brought to you for free and open access by the STEM Education & Professional Studies at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

**CAREER PLACEMENT OF GRADUATES WHO RECEIVED A BACHELOR OF
SCIENCE DEGREE IN TRAINING SPECIALIST**

A Research Paper

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the

Department of Occupational and Technical Studies

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

By

LaTrey E. Myrick

March 2008

Signature Page

This research paper was prepared by LaTrey Elaine Myrick under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz, in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree.

APPROVED BY:

Dr. John M. Ritz
Graduate Program Director

Date

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Signature Page	i
Table of Figures	v
Chapter	
I Introduction	1
Statement of Problem	1
Research Goals	2
Background and Significance	2
Limitations	4
Assumptions	5
Procedures	5
Definition of Terms	5
Overview of Chapters	6
II Review of Literature	7
Careers in Training	7
Worker Education and Expectation	12
The Training Specialist Program/Curriculum	20
III Methods and Procedures	27
Population	27
Instrument Design	27
Method of Data Collection	28
Statistical Analysis	28
Summary	28
IV Findings	29
Results	29
Graduates Currently Working within Training	29
Graduates Accepted Lower Occupational Status Positions	30
Graduates Facing Unemployment	31
Summary	33
V Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	35
Summary	35
Conclusions	35
Recommendations	37

References	38
-------------------	-----------

Appendices

Appendix A	Research Survey	42
Appendix B	Cover Letter	45
Appendix C	Follow Up Letter	47

Table of Figures

FIGURE		<i>Page</i>
Figure 1	Current Work Status	30
Figure 2	Position Acceptance and Skills	31
Figure 3	Expected Wages	31

Chapter I

Introduction

Upon graduating, many graduates look forward to finding employment within their career field, earning a desirable salary, and obtaining employment within a short period of time after graduation. Although education does pay, it may take time in order for graduates to meet success. Depending on the graduate's situation, some may apply for employment within other fields of study, move home to save money, and/or continue their education.

There appears to be declining job opportunities in the United States; other countries are battling similar employment problems. Schafer, in the article, "Degree, But No Jobs", stated that "China University graduates are facing the toughest job market since the communist takeover. By June only half of the country's 2002 graduates; about 1.5 million young people had landed jobs" (Schafer, 2003, p. 34). This research has shown that the job market has declined in several areas of the world and has caused college graduates to become jobless. This study will concentrate on bachelor's graduates who majored in the training specialist major at Old Dominion University.

Statement of Problem

The problem of this study was to determine career placement of graduates who received a bachelor of science degree from Old Dominion University in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies who majored in the Training Specialist program.

Research Objectives

To determine career placement of college graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the training specialist major, the following research objectives were analyzed:

- Determine whether Old Dominion University graduates were currently working within the training career field.
- Determine whether Old Dominion University graduates accepted lower occupational status positions and/or lower pay than often provided in their major.
- Determine whether Old Dominion University graduates were facing unemployment following a year of degree completion.

Background and Significance

There are researchers who have provided statements that support the need for research on career placement of college graduates. The article, “Grads Aren’t Seeing Green: The Class of 2003 Facing the Worse Job Market in a Decade”, suggests that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2003), the number of unemployed workers between the ages of 20 and 24 is 1.4 million, up 60% from four years ago. Job search website Monster.com found that 61% of graduates were expecting to move in with their parents after completion of their degrees (Chen, 2003).

Some employers believe that employed college graduates are not receiving adequate pay for their education. A forthcoming book, *Playing to Win: Managing Employability in a Knowledge Economy*, Brown and Hesketh (2004), argued that

“Young people are being sold higher education on the basis that they will get higher paying jobs, but this is based on a faulty understanding of the labor market” (O’Keeffe, 2004, p. 28). Brown and Hesketh (2004) also argues, “that companies are taking advantage of a labor market flooded with well-qualified young people, employing them in lower-level positions and paying salaries far below what a graduate would be expected in the past” (O’Keeffe, 2004, p. 28). Related articles expressed similar views. According to “NACE Reveals New Graduates Faced Decline in Starting Salary”, the Institute of Management and Administration suggested that starting pay for college graduates continues to decline. According to the latest report, the fall 2003 salary survey, published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2003) reported that those graduates who did see a rise in starting salaries experienced only a modest increase, continuing the trend of dampened pay levels.

“The economy has lost 2.3 million jobs since President Bush took office, with little evidence of job creation despite economic growth. Since July (2003), the economy has added only 42, 000 jobs a month, on average, while expanding at an 8.2 percent annual pace in the third quarter of 2003 and a 4 percent annual pace in the fourth quarter” (Porter, 2004, p. 1).

Porter (2004) suggests that economists have been puzzled for months about the sluggish employment market during the recovery process of the economy. A new forecast suggests that economists have realized the pattern established with the recovery: “fast economic growth being driven by even faster expansion in productivity, with business meeting demand by squeezing more output from their current employees instead of hiring workers” (2004, p. 1). Ultimately, economists say, hiring will recover because companies

can squeeze only so much productivity from their workers (Porter, 2004).

This frustrating economy and the poor job market had some graduates heading back to graduate school. According to a survey by Trucareers, a leading online job board for finding professionals, it revealed that 61 percent of individuals see continuing education as a way to make themselves more marketable in today's tough job market. Among the respondents, 45 percent reported losing their jobs as a result of the poor economy and 64 percent of unemployed respondents have been searching for employment for the last six months (PR Newswire, 2003).

This research addresses issues college graduates face after graduation. While some graduates remain unemployed, others have accepted lower paying positions. The number of positions available for graduates decreased more than 36% from 2000 to 2001, and according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, this trend will continue as jobs for graduates are expected to decline an additional 3.6% from 2002 to 2003 (Gainey & Barnett, 2003). Even though research shows evidence of a poor job market for college graduates, there was little information focusing on graduates within the training field. In addition, there was limited information offered on specific programs of graduates and their career placement.

Limitations

This study was conducted on graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies who majored in the Training Specialist program. The graduates involved in this study were a sample of graduates from the years 2002 and 2003.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the data obtained from the Old Dominion University graduates sample would be reflective of other graduates after degree completion. Second, it was assumed that the respondents to the survey understood their career placement as it relates to business and industry training. Last, it was assumed that the economy has caused some conditions of the current job market.

Procedures

By utilizing Old Dominion University, the researcher surveyed the population of graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies who majored in the Training Specialist program during the 2002 and 2003 years. A survey was used to obtain data. The survey consisted of specific questions that addressed college graduates and career placement to determine the percentages of participants' responses related to the research goals. The surveys were mailed to the graduates and data were tabulated related to their employment.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were important to this study:

- Unemployment- a situation where people who are willing and able to work can not find employment.
- Occupational Status- based on the level of education that is required to enter an occupation and the level of income that is associated with it.
- Institutional Performance Accountability (IPA) - a system that measures the

employment and the earnings of graduates from two-year public colleges.

- The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) - an organization devoted to developing people and their performance through learning.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter I, Introduction, set forth a problem to determine the career placement of graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies with a major in Training Specialist. With this knowledge, the researcher will determine the percentage of graduates who are currently working in the training field, the percentage of graduates who accepted jobs with a lower occupational status and/or lower pay, and the percentage of graduates who are facing unemployment.

Chapter II will contain a review of literature, which will present literature on careers in training, worker education and expectation, and an overview of the training specialist program. Chapter III presents the methods and procedures used by the researcher to gather data to determine the percentages of career placement from the Training Specialist program. Chapter IV describes the findings of the study. Chapter V summarizes the study and makes recommendations for the future.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

This research problem was to determine the career placement of graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies who majored in the Training Specialist program. Throughout the literature, information was uncovered on college graduates who majored in training. To properly address career placement of training specialist graduates, Chapter II reviews literature according to the following topics: careers in training, worker education and expectations, and an overview of the training specialist program.

Careers in Training

Training has a pertinent role in the competence and growth of a company and/or organization. Training serves as an investment to a company/organization that will increase important aspects such as retention, growth, performance, and development. Many other professionals also agree that training plays an important role within the workplace. In order to achieve organization's goals and expectations, trainers may take on different roles that are specific to the organization's need.

As stated in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2006), "Depending on the size, goals, and the nature of the organization, trainers may differ considerably in their responsibilities and in the methods they use" (p. 51). Trainers may use several methods in order to meet learning needs and organizational goals. These methods may include classroom training, hands-on-training, computer-based training, videos, and internet-

based training. Various methods and approaches can be implemented in training in an effort to maintain and achieve company goals; the careers of within this field have become an increasingly prevalent component in a company's success. In the article, "Learning Curve", it is stated that "Training has been identified as an important general aspect of management; which enables an employer to determine whether their employees, or contractors, are sufficiently competent" (2005, p. 41).

Hallett (2005) also emphasized that the ultimate goal is a competent workforce. In summary, Hallett suggested that

All training should fulfill the following criteria: interesting content presentation (to gain attention) linked with relevant learning content (focused clearly on the intellectual ability of the trainee), presented in an engaging way (to maintain interest) and validated by the appropriate assessment of understanding and skill (to identify achieved levels of initial competence). This should then be supported by ongoing programs of continuance and refresher training to maintain the required levels of competence among those trained (Hallett, 2005, p. 42).

As result of companies focusing on a competent workforce, training has become a priority, and as a result, human resource training continues to evolve in order to produce desired employee performance. The Occupational Outlook Handbook (2006) asserts that

In the past, these workers have been associated with performing the administrative function of an organization, such as handling employee benefits, questions, interviewing and hiring new staff in accordance with policies and requirements that have been established in conjunction with top management.

Today's human resource workers manage these tasks and increasingly consult top

executives regarding strategic planning (p. 50).

Training serves as a foundation to a company's growth and success; employees in training careers ensure that the training needs are appropriately identified, measured, taught and evaluated. The Occupational Handbook (2006) and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1991) recognizes careers within the training field. In addition, information was provided on specific job duties that these careers fulfill within an organization.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (2006) identified careers within the training field as training and development managers and specialists. Training and development managers and specialist conduct and supervise training and development programs for employees. Training managers provide training within the classroom. Their duties include setting up teaching materials prior to class, involving the class, and issuing completion certificates at the end of training. Training managers have the responsibility of understanding the learning process, creating an environment conducive to learning, ensuring that course objectives meet company goals, and achieving training results that meet organizational expectations/standards (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006).

Training specialist plan, organize, and direct a wide range of training activities. Training specialists consult with onsite supervisors regarding performance improvement, conduct orientation sessions, and arrange on-the-job training for new employees. They help employees maintain and improve their job skills. They help supervisors improve their interpersonal skills in order to deal effectively with employees. Within government, trainers function as caseworkers. Their duties include assessing the needs of the client and guiding them through the appropriate training methods. After training, clients may

either be referred to employer relations representatives or receive job placement assistance (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006).

The Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1991) identified the following careers within training: manager of education and training (alternate title: training administrator), technical training coordinator, technical trainer instructor (alternate title: training specialist), training representative (alternate title: training instructor), and job development specialist.

Managers of education and training plan, coordinate, and direct personnel training and staff development programs for industrial, commercial, service, or governmental establishments. They confer with management and supervisory personnel in order to determine training needs. The specific duties include compiling data and analyzing past and current year training requirements, formulating training policies and schedules, designating training procedures, organizing and developing training manuals, training assigned instructors and supervisors in effective techniques for training, updating records and compiling statistical reports, coordinating and establishing courses with technical and professional courses offered by community schools, and may screen employees for educational programs or for promotion or transfer (Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1991).

Technical training coordinators coordinate activities of instructors engaged in training employees or customers of industrial or commercial establishments. They collaborate with managers, instructors, and/or customer representatives to determine training needs. The specific duties may include assigning instructors to conduct training, evaluating training packages, assigning instructors to in-service and out-service training

classes, monitoring training budgets, attending seminars to obtain useful information for the training staff, and monitoring instructors during lectures and laboratory demonstrations (Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1991).

Technical training instructors develop and conduct programs to train employees or customers of industrial or commercial establishments in installation, programming, safety, repair of machinery, and equipment. Training instructors collaborate with management and staff or technical training coordinators to determine training objectives. The specific duties include writing training programs, scheduling classes, demonstrating procedures being taught, observing trainees in laboratories, administering written and practical exams, participating in seminars to obtain information useful for the training facility, and integrating information into the training program (Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1991).

Training representatives develop and conduct training programs for employees of industrial, commercial, service, or government establishments. They collaborate with management to gain knowledge of work situations requiring training for employees to better understand changes in policies, procedures, regulations, and technologies. The specific duties may include formulating teaching outlines and determining instructional methods, selecting and developing teaching aids, conducting training sessions and testing trainees to measure progress, and evaluating the effectiveness of training (Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1991).

Job development specialists promote and develop employment and on-the-job training opportunities for disadvantaged applicants and further assist employers in revising standards which exclude applicants from jobs. The specific duties include

demonstrating to employers effectiveness and profitability of employing chronically unemployed by identifying jobs that workers could perform, establishing relationships regarding problems, complaints, and progress of recently placed disadvantaged applicants, and recommending corrective action, assisting employers in establishing wage scales, promotes, develops, and terminates on-the-job training program opportunities with employers and assists in writing contracts. They identify the need for and assisting in development of auxiliary services to facilitate bringing disadvantaged applicants into job ready status and informing business, labor, and public about training programs through the media (Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1991).

Training is increasingly being recognized as a valuable component to a company's success. Therefore, careers in training will continue to take on different roles and responsibilities. Through training, employee needs and company goals are properly assessed, developed, and maintained through performance.

Worker Education and Expectations

Upon entering the work force, individuals who graduate with Bachelor of Science degrees in the field of Training Specialists are expected to enter the work force with certain skill sets and qualities. In reviewing the literature, it reflected that the most common skill sets in terms of employer expectations are as follows: (1) transferability of the knowledge base and skills, (2) degrees from reputable schools that have met institutional performance accountability (IPA) or have been rated and/or evaluated on some type of evaluation system, and (3) candidates with a strong work ethic (Quality Education: School Reform for the New American Economy, 1994).

According to Dybis (2004), employers are “becoming bloodhounds” in efforts to select the best possible candidates for their companies and trying to avoid applicants who are described as “red hires”, “poor potential hires”, and/or “mis-hires”. He reported that employer screening has become a billion dollar industry in the past ten years; however, despite the cost, employers implement these systems as one of the strategies to eliminate risk to their company. These risks could include, but are not limited to (1) individuals who have falsified education and work experiences on resumes and applications, (2) individuals who have personalities which may be problematic and cause negligence and/or potential lawsuits, and (3) individuals who do not have the ability to transfer their knowledge base to real world situations.

Further, according to Tough Choices: The Report of the New Commission on the skills of the American Workforce (2007), studies such as the institutional performance accountability (IPA) or other systems often serve to measure the quality and value of an institution’s graduates. Institutional performance accountability is a system that measures the employment and the earnings of graduates from two-year public colleges. Two-year colleges are just becoming the target of such measures; however, graduates of four-year institutions of learning have been granted or denied employment opportunities or further educational opportunities solely based on the reputation of their alma maters. Further, as Herman, Olivo, and Gioia, state in *Impending Crisis: Too Many Jobs: Too Few People* (2003), employers are seeking applicants that are “current with the needs of the job”, “current with technology, procedures, and perspectives” and who are graduating from institutions that are “preparing them for today’s workforce and not yesterday’s workforce” (p. 102). Also, employers are seeking candidates that are credible and who

demonstrate not only an academic readiness and preparedness, but they also eliminate risks to the company. Those candidates with a criminal history and/or delinquent credit may not be seen as favorable by potential employers. According to Burk, Jones and Doherty (2005), transferability of skills includes, but is not limited to communicating application of number, information technology, and self-reliance. Further, when looking for suitable candidates for employment, employers seek to discover if the applicant had an educational experience that encompasses knowledge acquisition as well as skills practice, if the applicant has had experience which required working individually as well as functioning as a part of a team, and if the applicant has the ability to decipher by using higher order thinking skills in the areas of analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation as well as extensive skills in communicating information. In essence, employers want potential candidates for employment who have the skills to successfully engage in “learning transfer” (Burke et al, 2005) by taking the knowledge, experience, and skill sets that they have acquired into real workplace situations.

Transferability of Skills and Knowledge Base

The literature on training indicates that one of the expectations that employers have for new hires is that they possess the ability to transfer their acquired skills and knowledge base to the real world. The completion of four years at an institution of higher learning or the completion and granting of a degree does not guarantee that a recent graduate can transfer successfully into the work world (Burke, Jones, & Doherty, 2005). Employers are implementing various steps and procedures into the hiring process to ensure that these graduates and potential hires do not only have a strong knowledge

base, but that they have the ability to use what they have acquired in their coursework, internships, practicum, co-curricular activities, and volunteer experiences into use in their positions in the workforce. Further, a graduate's ability to do this successfully is known as transferability.

According to the literature, there are several measures that industry utilizes to ensure that potential hires have what they, the employers, need. Employers use a variety of screening strategies to ensure that candidates for employment have the ability to understand transferability and to know how to transfer their acquired knowledge and skills while executing their assigned duties. According to Carnevale and Porro (1994) only one third of those entering the workforce are prepared and ready for the job opportunities available and another thirteen percent require re-training to be ready to be productive in the workforce. In addition, they assert that there was "available evidence that suggest the lack of transferability of academic learning into real-world environments can only be remedied by providing a different pedagogy that mixes academic and applied learning" (p. 11). With the aforementioned serving as a premise for the quality of higher education in past years, employers are seeking to recruit graduates from institutions that have developed a pedagogy that combines academic learning with applications (Carnevale & Porro, 1994). In *Impeding Crisis: Too Many Jobs, Too Few People*, the researchers Herman, Olivo, and Gioia (2003) suggests that inadequacy of education equals college graduates who are not prepared to meet job skill needs and further assert that: "Few educators-teachers and administrators-have a good sense of what skills employers expect their graduates to have. For the most part, dialog with the business leaders or their customers simply doesn't happen" (p. 84).

Therefore, in recent years, companies have been recruiting students from institutions of higher education that are designing their curriculum and instruction based on input and/or partnerships with businesses and in doing this, these colleges and universities are educating graduates to be productive in the workforce. In addition to the aforementioned, employers are screening potential hires to determine if college graduates have the knowledge base to perform the duties of the job and to determine if they can transfer and apply their knowledge base. The hiring process at many agencies usually consists of several tiers/steps, one of which is to have the applicant to engage in “problem solving role playing” (Dybis, 2004) before even considering the candidate for hire.

Reputable Schools-Institutional Performance Accountability and Evaluation Systems

In the previous section on transferability of skills and knowledge base, it was mentioned that employers seek graduates who have attended colleges and universities in which academic institutions have partnered with businesses and industry to gain input and a greater understanding of the needs of these potential employers and have taken steps to incorporate this information into the design of their teaching pedagogy. In addition to that, employers often seek and use data which reflects the productivity of an institution’s graduates to gauge if that particular institution has quality programming and produces graduates who are competent in their field of study. Candidates can be included or excluded solely based on where they attended college; moreover, certain institutions have gained notoriety based on their curriculum, opportunities for training, and the success of their graduates.

According to Quality Education School Reform for the New American Economy (1994), the number of high school students seeking higher education is increasing and in addition, the student enrollment at post secondary institution is increasing. However, the increase in the number of those seeking a higher education does not mean that all schools are viewed equally. While the level of educational attainment is one criterion for selecting applicants, it is not the sole variable that qualifies an applicant. Beyond the basics of having a degree, employers may use other criteria such as grade point average and the ability to transfer skills. Very lucrative companies such as Fortune 500 or Fortune 400 companies who provide positions which are higher paid have the advantage of being able to heavily recruit students from schools who have a reputation for producing students who are highly successful upon graduation (Quality Education: School Reform for the New American Economy, 1994).

According to Pascarella, Cruce, Unbach, Walnick, Kuh, Carini, Hayek, Gonyea, and Zhao (2006), institutions that are selective in their admittance process often serve as an indicator to the quality of students that the institution will produce. Moreover, if companies are seeking the best graduates they may use this criteria for recruiting purposes and heavily recruit from these colleges and universities. The companies who are willing to pay the top salaries and offer the best incentives are more than likely the companies who attract these graduates. Larger companies can offer these graduates a more economic advantage and in turn assume that they will get a highly qualified employee who will yield high productivity.

As previously mentioned, employers often use the reputation of schools to select students and also to measure potential graduates by the selectivity and exclusiveness of

their alma mater. In addition to reputation, selectivity, and exclusivity they may serve as a basis for hiring and recruiting standards. Employers are also influenced by the formal ranking systems when selecting potential employees. For example, Business Week and U.S. News and World Report produce a report each year which ranks the top business schools. Other highly regarded magazines such as Time, Money, and Newsweek also publish ranking systems which can be of influence to both potential college students, parents of potential college students, as well as potential employers.

In *Educational Accountability: Setting Standards, Improving Performance*, Lingenfelter (2003) notes that educational institutions must strive to have high performance and accountability. Educational accrediting bodies such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association for Colleges and Universities, and the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education established criteria to accredit an institution by either giving it a passing or failing mark. If students are graduating from institutions who have lost their accreditation or come under warning and/or scrutiny in the area of academics, the institution not only loses support of the state and federal government, but these institutions may be perceived as inadequate by potential employers. Whether valid or not, the potential employer may correlate the student's quality of education to the poor evaluation of his/her alma mater.

Strong Work Ethic

According to *Quality Education: School Reform for the New American Economy* (1994), employers are seeking graduates with a strong work ethic. Further, Pascarella et al, (2006) note that among the expectations of potential employers, there are seven principles/categories that constitute a highly qualified applicant. Among these

seven principles are “time on task” and “high expectations” which are considered to be characteristics of an individual with a strong work ethic. The research also suggests that college students who develop the following come into the industry more likely to meet the expectations of their employers. These include positive interactions and networks with their peers, strong and positive relationships with their teaching faculty, involvement in co-curricular activities such as student organizations, and/or volunteer and extended learning activities such as internships (Pascarella et. al, 2006). All of these principles and skills are considered to be key elements to an individual developing a strong work ethic.

In addition, students who excel after being granted admission to an institution of higher education that is very competitive are sometimes automatically viewed as those students who are ready to meet the challenges and demands set forth by a potential employer. For students who may not have attended one of the more selective or high ranking institutions of higher learning, they may appeal to an employer based on other criteria such as their involvement in the aforementioned activities. Student involvement activities such as these serve to show a candidate’s initiative and leadership qualities and moreover reflect that the student has most likely been involved in activities which may have required development of a strong work ethic. Further, The National Study of Student Learning (NSSL) (1987) notes that in evaluating schools, they use good practices in undergraduate education as outlined by Chickering and Gramson. Among the categories and characteristics cited Chickering and Gramson is the area of high expectations. Among the things that are encompassed in that category are: course challenge/effort, scholarly intellectual emphasis, number of textbooks or assigned readings, and number of term papers or other written reports (Chickering & Gramson,

1987). The literature reflects that companies are looking for candidates who have shown exhibited excellence of academics, but in addition college evaluation systems and employers do take other factors into account such as the additional responsibilities that a student undertakes during his/her course of study.

Training Specialist Program/Curriculum

As graduates enter the workforce, there are certain educational levels and expectations an employer will seek with new hires. As discussed in the previous section worker education and expectations and institutional performance accountability is acknowledged as important variables during the hiring process. Within this section, Old Dominion University's undergraduate requirements will be presented for the Bachelor of Science degree, Training Specialist program.

Old Dominion University is an accredited institution by the commission of colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002-2004). In preparing students on the baccalaureate degree level for the workforce, Old Dominion University meets the students need through three educational levels. These educational levels are (1) lower division general education, (2) technical content courses and training electives, and (3) upper division general education.

According to the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies, the training specialist program is designed to prepare students to design, develop, and present training in business and industry (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002-2004). The training specialist program is based on the latest research by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). ASTD is the world's largest association dedicated to workplace learning and performance professionals. ASTD started in 1944 when the

organization held its first annual conference. ASTD members come from more than 100 countries and connect locally in 140 United States chapters and 24 global networks. Members work in thousands of organizations of all sizes, in government, as independent consultants, and suppliers. ASTD has widened the profession's focus to link learning and performance to individual and organizational results and also serves as a voice on critical public policy issues. Overall, ASTD provides resources for learning and performance professionals, bring people together, offering professional development opportunities, provides a voice of the profession, and recognize excellence and sets the standard for best practices (ASTD, 2006).

The Training Specialist emphasis is a 120-hour program designed to prepare students to become trainers who design, develop, and present training in business and industry. Training specialists analyze the needs of specific groups, plan new programs and revise old programs to meet those needs, analyze jobs and operations for teaching purposes, prepare course outlines, write training manuals, furnish and equip classrooms, publicize and market training within the company, counsel individual employees on problems that might be solved through training, measure and maintain employee productivity and job satisfaction (Industrial Technology and Training Specialist Program, 2007). There are three divisions of education within this emphasis: lower division general education, technical content courses and training electives, and upper division general education.

The lower level division of general education represents the common core of the baccalaureate degree. The common core level prepares students for pursuing their major, broadening their views of life, and understanding an increasingly global and diverse

world. The Old Dominion University Catalog (2002-2004) states “lower level (general) education provides students with the basic skills and intellectual perspectives to engage in the search for knowledge” (p. 55). Within the lower division of education, the student must complete forty-seven credit hours. In fulfilling these credits, students gain analytical and critical thinking skills and the ability to make reasoned judgments. The following five objectives must be met in order to fulfill general education: (1) develop and demonstrate effective uses of language, (2) develop mathematical and computer literacy, (3) develop an understanding of natural sciences and technology and their contributions to human culture, (4) develop an understanding of human behavior, society and culture, with specific attention to technology, international perspectives, and issues related to ethnicity, race, and gender, and (5) integrate knowledge at the advanced level (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002-2004). After completion of the lower level requirements, students pursue the technical content courses.

The technical content courses are completed within the student’s junior and senior year. The lower division provides an educational foundation for students; technical content courses focus in the student’s chosen field of study. The technical content courses within the Training Specialist program prepare students to become trainers who design, development, and present training in business and industry. In order to prepare students to become effective Training Specialist, Old Dominion University requires the completion of forty-eight credit hours. These technical content courses fall under the following categories: accounting, communication, management, marketing, occupational and technical studies, and occupational and technical education. In addition to completing courses within these categories, the technical content courses also include twenty-five

credits in training. Students must consult with their advisor for an approved list of courses to meet training elective requirements.

Within accounting there is a three credit course requirement, Principles of Accounting 201. Principles of Accounting 201 teaches elementary accounting concepts and procedures. These concepts and procedures are used in preparation for sole proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations (Old Dominion University, 2002-2004).

Within communication there is a three credit course, Small Group Process 312U. Small Group Process 312U is an introduction to theory, research, and applications in a task group. Topics included within this course are communication and group decision making, small group process, and group conflicts (Old Dominion University, 2002-2004).

Within management there are two three credit courses, Principles of Management 325 and Human Resource Management 340. Principles of Management addresses the fundamentals of the managerial process within the context of 21st century organizations. Topics of this course are presented through macro and micro perspectives. Human Resource Management 340 has a focus on the functional duties associated with personnel/human resource administration. The topics discussed are human resource planning, selection, performance appraisal, training, discipline, wage and salary, occupational safety and health, equal employment opportunity, and labor relations (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002-2004).

Within occupational and technical studies (OTS) there are 33 credit hours, which are OTS 100 Sales Techniques, OTS 102 Advertising and Promotion, OTS 202 Supervision of Personnel, OTS 289 Adult Education and Training, OTS 370T Technology and Society, OTS 402 Training Methods, OTS 405 Directed Work

Experience, OTS 430 Technology Applications in Training, OTS 450 Assessment, Evaluation and Improvement, OTS 481 Occupational Career Transition, and OTED 400 Instructional Systems Development. OTS 100 Sales Techniques is an introductory course that focuses on the customer needs, wants, and desires to products and services in order to develop a long-term sales relationship. OTS 102 Advertising and Promotion is an introductory course that teaches the fundamental product and service promotion processes of planning and producing advertising and promotion campaigns. OTS 202 Supervision of Personnel introduces the basic concepts of employee supervision. It focuses on the first line supervision strategies that will ensure employees are following appropriate company personnel procedures. OTS 289 Adult Education and Training is an in-depth overview of education and training for adults. Attention is given to adult theory and strategies for facilitating the learning process. OTS 370T Technology and Society is a writing intensive course that provides insight into the fundamental, historical, and contemporary nature of technology as an area of human knowledge. OTS 402 Training Methods is designed to develop a student's ability to present basic instructional presentation techniques and methods to be used in business, government, and industrial organizations. This course has an emphasis on adult training. OTS 405 Directed Work Experience requires students to be employed the summer prior to his/her senior year. During employment, the student's work is supervised by the job supervisor and the course instructor. OTS 430 Technology Applications in Training prepares students to plan and conduct training using computer systems. The course covers instructional skills, computer systems, and software to develop students proficient in teaching basic computer skills in business, industry, and government. OTS 450 Assessment, Evaluation and

Improvement prepares students to plan for and conduct assessments to use in planning instructional programs, evaluate individuals learning, measure program effectiveness and efficiency, and evaluate return on investment. OTS 481 Occupational Career Transition provides senior level students with the skills and techniques to bridge the gap from college to a career. This course focuses on generation of a professional portfolio and experiential learning that will transfer into today's job market (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002-2004).

Within Occupational and Technical Education (OTED) there is a three credit course, OTED 400 Instructional Systems Development. Instructional Systems Development teaches students to design and develop classroom instructional materials. Training specialist students learn to develop these materials through the instructional design process (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002-2004).

After completion of technical content courses, students may pursue upper division general education. Upper division general education offers students three options: option A, option B, and option C. Option A, an approved minor within merchandising, training and development, or technology education requires completion of twelve to twenty credit hours. In addition, students may obtain a second degree or second major. Option B, a cluster requires completion of nine credit hours. Option C, international certificate requires completion of twelve credit hours.

Once students have completed the required courses, students must meet additional graduation requirements. Students must have an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0, pass the Writing Proficiency Exam, and complete the Senior Assessment.

Summary

Chapter II, Review of Literature, discussed careers in training, worker education and expectations, and the Training Specialist Program. Chapter III, Methods and Procedures described the subject selection, research design, and data analysis techniques.

Chapter III

Methods and Procedures

The problem of this study was to determine the career placement of Bachelor of Science degree graduates in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies majoring in the Training Specialist program. This chapter will focus on the population studied, the design of the instrument, the method of data collection, and the statistical analysis of data. A discussion of each of these topics will follow.

Population

The population of this study consisted of Old Dominion University graduates from the Bachelor of Science degree program in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies who majored in the Training Specialist program. Graduates were from the years 2002 and 2003. There were a total of 27 graduates.

Instrument Design

A survey was designed that consisted of questions regarding career placement of recent college graduates. It was designed with eight closed ended questions and one open ended question. The information was to be gathered to address the research goals which were to determine whether Old Dominion University graduates were currently working within the training field, to determine whether Old Dominion University graduates accepted lower occupational status positions and/or lower pay, and to determine whether Old Dominion University graduates were facing unemployment following a year of degree completion. The questions were designed using the Likert scale. A copy of the survey is found in Appendix

Method of Data Collection

A cover letter, Appendix B, was mailed to graduates in October 2007 along with the survey. Follow-up letters, Appendix C, and surveys again were sent to graduates in November 2007, who did not respond to the initial survey. In addition to survey returns through mail, during the follow-up process graduates were given the option to respond through the researcher's Old Dominion University E-mail account or providing responses via telephone.

Statistical Analysis

The survey responses of the participants were tabulated to show the career placement of college graduates participating in the study. The information was evaluated using percentages, mean, and the mode responses of each question. To calculate the mean and the mode, values were assigned to survey responses.

Summary

The population of graduates receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies, who majored in the Training Specialist program graduates, were surveyed. The population was defined, the method of data collection was presented, and statistical analysis was discussed. The findings will be analyzed in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Findings

This chapter represents the results of data collected from surveying the Bachelor of Science degree graduates from the Occupational and Technical Studies Department with a major in Training Specialist. The data were collected to determine career placements of graduates from the Training Specialist program in the years 2002 and 2003.

Results

There were twenty-seven graduates during the years 2002 and 2003 from the Training Specialist program. Twenty-seven surveys were sent to these graduates. Seven graduates responded to the initial survey. One survey was returned to the researcher, due to an insufficient address. Nineteen follow-up surveys were sent to the remaining graduates, who did not respond to the initial survey. Ten graduates responded to the follow-up survey. Of the twenty-seven graduates, seventeen (62%) participated in the study.

The following are the responses of the participating graduates. The results were as follows:

Question 1, Determined the year of graduation of the participants: 2002 or 2003. Seven respondents (41%) were from the year 2002 and ten respondents (59%) were from the year 2003.

Question 2, Determined if the graduates were currently working. Fifteen respondents (88%) were currently working and two respondents (12%) were not currently working.

Question 3, Determined if the graduates were working within business and

industry training. Five respondents (29%) were currently working in business and industry training and ten respondents (59%) were not currently working in business and industry training (See Figure 1).

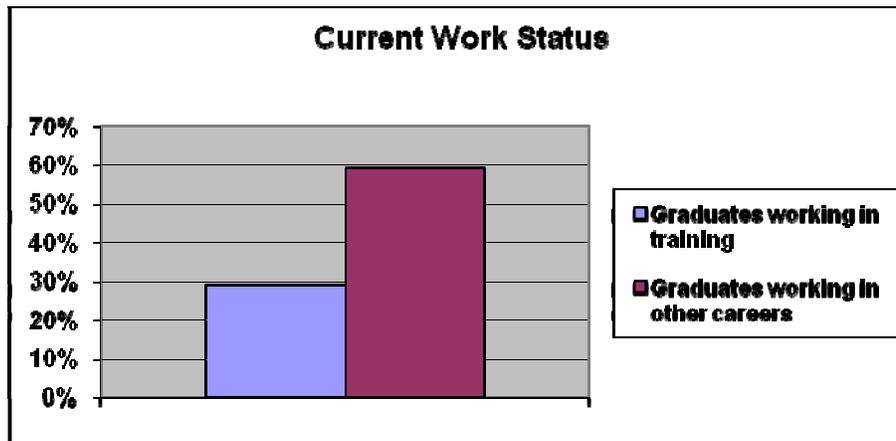


Figure 1. Current Work Status

Question 4, Determined if the graduates accepted a position that uses the skills they developed through obtaining their bachelor's degree. Four respondents (24%) strongly agreed, six respondents (35%) agreed, no respondents were uncertain, three respondents (18%) disagreed, two respondents (12%) strongly disagreed, and two respondents did not answer the question. The mean was 3.46 and the mode was 4, which indicates that respondents agreed that they used the skills developed through obtaining their bachelor's degree (See Figure 2).

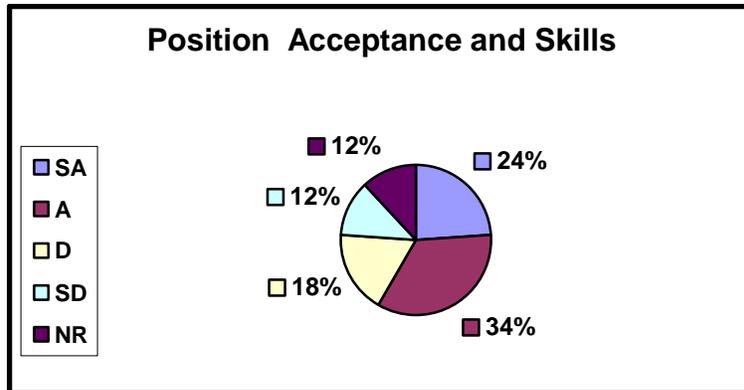


Figure 2. Position Acceptance and Skills

Question 5, Determined if the graduates received wages that were expected after graduation. Three respondents (18%) strongly agreed, five respondents (29%) agreed, one respondent (6%) was uncertain, two respondents (12%) disagreed, four respondents (24%) strongly disagreed, and two respondents (12%) did not answer the question. The mean was 3.06 and the mode was 4, which indicates that respondents agreed that they received wages that were expected after graduation (See Figure 3).

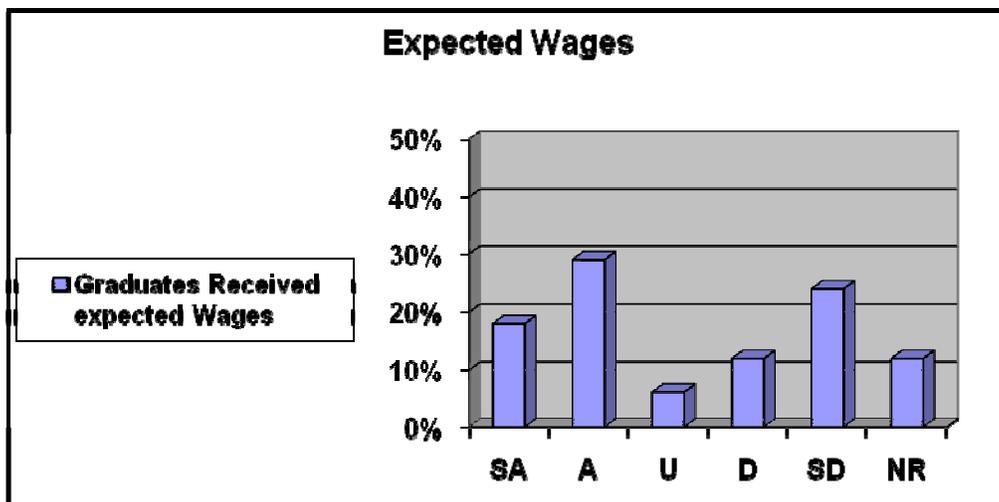


Figure 3. Expected Wages

Question 6, Determined if graduates were not currently working, were they

actively seeking employment. One respondent (6%) responded yes, one respondent (6%) responded no, and fifteen respondents (88%) had no response.

Question 7, Determined if graduates were not currently working, have they worked within the year following degree completion. One respondent (6%) responded yes, one respondent (6%) responded no, and fifteen respondents (88%) had no response.

Question 8, Determined if graduates were not currently working, have they been employed at least a year following degree completion. Two respondents (12%) responded yes and fifteen respondents (88%) had no response.

Question 9, Determined graduates' current job title and asked for a description of their job. Respondent one is a Loan Officer and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent two is an Incoming Materials Inspector and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent three is a Quality Control Specialist and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent four is a Portfolio Association Manager; the respondent manages up to six different homeowner and condominium associations in the tidewater area. Respondent five is a Training and Development Project Manager and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent six is a Parts and Service Manager for Caterpillar and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent seven is an Implementation Manager; the respondent implements corporate purchasing and travel card programs, recommend best practices, and assist with process re-engineering. Respondent eight is a Nanny and is currently enrolled in Master's in Education Program. Respondent nine is a Senior Manufacturing Engineer and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent ten is self employed and no additional information

was given for the description. Respondent eleven is a Director of Information Management and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent twelve is Customer Service Sales Lead and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent thirteen is a Consultant and Adjunct Professor of English and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent fourteen is a Branch Replenishment Buyer and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent fifteen is a Packer; the respondent processes and stores product, re-order and repair equipment, and process and store industrial waste. Respondent sixteen is a District Manger and no additional information was given for the description. Respondent seventeen is currently disabled.

Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of career placement of graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the Training Specialist Program, which was accomplished by a survey, follow-up surveys, e-mailed surveys, and survey responses via telephone. After data were collected, it determined what year participants graduated: 2002 or 2003, participants who were currently working, participants who were currently working in business and industry, participants who accepted a position that use the skills they developed through obtaining their bachelor's degree, participants who received wages that were expected after graduation, participants who were not currently working, participants who were unemployed had they obtained employment within a year following degree completion, participants who were not currently working had they been unemployed a year following degree completion, and

participant's current job title and a description of their job responsibilities. Chapter V will summarize the research of this paper, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter will provide a summary of the research study. The researcher will draw conclusions based on the data reported and make recommendations for future studies.

Summary

This study was conducted to determine the career placement of graduates who received a Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies who majored in the Training Specialist program. The limiting factors of this study were that the research was conducted on a small population of graduates who received a bachelor's degree and all the graduates were in the Training Specialist Program. Assumptions were made that data obtained from the Old Dominion University graduates would be reflective of other graduates after degree completion, that the respondents understood their career placement as it relates to business and industry training, and that the economy has caused some conditions of the current job market.

Data were collected from the graduates who majored in the Training Specialist program. Surveys were mailed to the graduates. The data were tabulated to show the percentages, mean and the mode of responses.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were based on the findings of this research study and its goals.

Goal 1: To determine whether Old Dominion University graduates were currently working within the training career field. Training serves as an investment to a company/organization that will increase important aspects such as retention, growth, performance, and development. In order to maintain these aspects, various careers in training possess different roles and responsibilities. The Occupational Outlook Handbook (2006) and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1991) determined careers and their responsibilities. With this knowledge, the researcher concluded that graduates who were not currently working within training, were the majority, which was (59%) of graduates not working in the training field. Less than half of training specialist graduates, 29%, were working in the training career field. Even though less than half were working within training, more than half of training specialist graduates (52%) felt that they used skills developed through the training specialist program.

Goal 2: To determine whether Old Dominion University graduates accepted lower occupational status positions and/or lower pay. The review of literature determined that larger companies are able to offer the most qualified graduates a more economic advantage and in turn assume that they will yield high productivity. With this knowledge, the researcher concluded that training specialist graduates are not accepting lower status positions and/or lower pay, based on the majority, 46% of graduates, who reported receiving wages expected after graduation.

Goal 3: To determine whether Old Dominion University graduates were facing unemployment following a year of degree completion. The Review of Literature determined that institutional performance accountability (IPA) or other evaluation systems are acknowledged as an important variable during the hiring process.

Training specialist graduates are prepared to design, develop, and present training. With this knowledge, the researcher concluded that training specialist graduates were not facing unemployment, due to the majority, 88% of graduates, were employed within a year following degree completion.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made by the researcher:

1. Since this research focused on graduates who received a bachelor's degree in the training specialist program, future research should be performed to determine if graduates received further education and development within the training field.
2. Since it was determined that 29% of training specialists graduates were currently working in training, future research should be performed to determine what worker education and expectation performance gaps they have observed in new hires.
3. Continue to conduct follow-up studies on the training specialist degree to determine what new competencies and skills need to be added to the program.

References

- American Society for Training and Development. (2007). ASTD Research. Retrieved July 30, 2007, from *ASTD Workplace Learning and Performance*. Web Site: http://www.astd.org/astd/Research/about_research.htm
- Burke, V., Jones, I. & Doherty, M. (2005). *Analysing Student Perceptions of Transferable Skills Via Undergraduate Degree Programmes*. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 6 (2), (pp.132-144).
- Carnevale, A. & Porro, J. (1994) *Quality Education: School Reform for the New American Economy*. United States Department of Education: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Chen, C. (2003). *Grads Aren't Seeing Green: The Class of '03 is facing the Worst Job Market in a Decade*. *Fortune*. New York: Jun 23, 2003. Vol. 147, Iss. 13; pg. 29
- Davis, C. (2003). *Temporary Employment: An Emerging Alternative for College Graduates*. Retrieved March 14, 2008, from Sam Advanced Management Journal. Web Site: <http://www.albusiness.com/sam-advanced-management-journal/20030322>
- Dybis, K. (2004). *Firms Go High Tech to Screen Applicants*. In David Ramm (Eds.), *Jobs in America*. (Volume 78, Number 4, pp. 145-147) United States of America. The H.W. Wilson Company.
- Hallet, F. (2005). *Training. Learning Curve*. Retrieved September 7, 2007, from Web Site: <http://www.shponline.co.uk.html>
- Harman, R., Olivo, T., & Gioia, J. (2003) *Impending Crisis: Too many Jobs, Too Few People*. Winchester: Oakhill Press.
- Lingenfeller, P. (2003). *Educational Accountability: Setting Standards, Improving Performance*. *Change*, 35 (2). Retrieved December 2, 2007, from ERIC.
- National Center on Education and the Economy. (2007). *Tough Choices, Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Keefe, A. (2004). *What Price of Paper? Just as the Government Raises Fees to Finance Greater Access to Higher Education, Research Suggests it's worth it*. Retrieved March 14, 2008, from New Statesman. Web Site: <http://www.newstatesman.com/print/200401260017>
- Old Dominion University Department of Occupational and Technical Studies. Brochure.

- (2007). *Industrial Technology and Training Specialist programs*.
- Old Dominion University. Office of Academic Affairs. (2001). *Old Dominion University Catalog 2002-2004* (Volume LXII, Number 1).
- Pascarella, E., Cruce, T., Umbach, P., Wolniak, G., Kuh, G., Carini, R., et al. (2006). *Industrial Selectivity and Good Practices an Undergraduate Education: How Strong is the Link?*. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77 (2), (pp. 251-285).
- Porter, E. (2004). *Jobs Expected to Continue to Lag Economy*. Business. Retrieved March 14, 2008, from The New York Times. Web Site: <http://www.nytimes.com>
- PR Newswire. (2003). *Frustrated by Economy and Poor Job Market, Many Head Back-to-School, According to New Trucareers Survey*. Retrieved March 14, 2008, from PR Newswire Inc. Web Site: <http://www.prnewswire.com/comp/907109>
- Schafer, S. (2003). *Degrees, But No Jobs*. Retrieved March 14, 2008, from Newsweek International. Web Site: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/60099>
- United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration & United States Employment Service. (1991). *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (4th, ed).
- United States Department of Labor, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2006). *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (Bulletin 2600).

Appendices

Appendix A	Research Survey
Appendix B	Cover Letter
Appendix C	Follow-up Letter

Appendix A
Research Survey

Career Placement of Old Dominion University Training Specialist

Purpose: Determine the career placement of Bachelor of Science degree graduates in the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies majoring in training specialist from Old Dominion University.

Directions: Please read each question and check the appropriate answer. Check only one answer for each question. If you are currently working, answer Questions 1 through 5 and then skip to Question 9. If you are not currently working, answer Questions 1-2, 6-8, and 9. Thank You.

1. What year did you receive your Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University?
2002
2003
2. Are you currently working?
Yes
No
3. If currently working, are you working within business and industry training?
Yes
No
4. Have you accepted a position that uses the skills you developed through obtaining your Bachelor's degree?
Strongly Agree Agree Uncertain Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. Are your wages what you expected to receive after earning your Bachelor's degree?
Strongly Agree Agree Uncertain Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. If you are not currently working, are you actively seeking employment?
Yes
No

7. If you are not currently working, have you worked within a year following degree completion?

Yes

No

8. If you are not currently working, have you been unemployed at least a year following your degree completion?

Yes

No _____ in what employment areas

9. List your current title of your job if you are employed. Please describe.

Appendix B
Cover Letter

LaTrey Myrick
28416 General Thomas Highway
Franklin, Virginia 23851
E-mail: latrey_Myrick@msn.com

Dear Participant:

My name is LaTrey Myrick. I am currently conducting research for the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies at Old Dominion University to determine career placement of college graduates from the years 2002 and 2003 who majored in training specialist.

In order to conduct this study, it is critical to determine the career placement of recent college graduates. As a recent graduate, your experience during your career search will provide valuable information to this study. Your cooperation and participation will be greatly appreciated and it is essential to the success of this study.

The success of this study depends on your input. If you decide to participate, please be assured that all responses will be held confidential. Please answer the questions requested on the survey by checking the appropriate response to each statement and return the survey to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

LaTrey Myrick
Graduate Student

Enclosure

Appendix C
Follow-up Letter

LaTrey Myrick
3603 Gateway Drive Apt. 3B
Portsmouth, Virginia 23703
E-mail: lmyri001@odu.edu

Dear Participant:

My name is LaTrey Myrick. I am currently conducting research for the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies at Old Dominion University to determine the career placement of college graduates from the year 2002 and 2003 who majored in the training specialist program.

Two weeks ago, I mailed a cover letter and a survey addressed to you. I did not receive a response. I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. Your experience will help determine the career placement of college graduates. I hope that you greatly consider being a participant in this study.

Your input is vital to the success of this study. If you decide to participate, I ensure that all responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the questions requested on the survey by checking the appropriate response to each statement. Please feel free to answer these questions by my school E-mail address: **lmyri001@odu.edu** and/or by phone (757) 535-8509.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

LaTrey Myrick
Graduate Student

Enclosure