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Effective Training Methods for Deans and Administrative Managers of Virginia Western Community College

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EFFECTIVE TRAINING METHODS

FOR DEANS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGERS OF

VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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A Research Study Presented to the Faculty of

the Department of STEM Education and Professional Studies

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Western Community College's student population has been consistently increasing in numbers over the past three years, raising the FTEs 17% in 2009 and offering new programs of studies. These new programs of study include Veterinary Technician and Culinary Arts. With the rise in student population develops the need to improve administration, work environments, and managerial effectiveness.

As the student population grows, so does the way Virginia Western Community College deans and administrative managers conduct business. Traditional classroom lectures for job training may not be the most effective methods to train deans and administrative managers. There are many training techniques that would provide ongoing refresher training and introduce new technology for improved communication and increased morale within the office. This study will explore which training methods currently exist for deans and administrative managers and will project recommendations to improve training to best meet the goals of learning required to operate an efficient office.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the most effective delivery methods for training deans and administrative managers to be better communicators and morale boosters at Virginia Western Community College for continued professional development and to create better office morale.

RESEARCH GOALS

The following goals were used to direct this study:

1. Determine appropriate delivery methods, classroom, online, or on-the-job training, for training deans and administrative managers in communication.

2. Determine appropriate delivery methods, classroom, online, or on-the-job training, for training deans and administrative managers in enhancing office moral.

3. Recommend training methods, classroom, online, or on-the-job training, for deans and administrative managers at Virginia Western Community College.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

With the increase in student population lays a need for an improved way for Virginia Western Community College deans and administrative managers to conduct business. The delivery methods of training (classroom, online, or on-the-job training) need to best fit the trainees to be effective. The training methods that are currently in place at Virginia Western Community College may not be the most effective for continued increases in student population to be served. By establishing the best training methods, Virginia Western can enhance the leadership quality of the deans and administrative managers, which will increase communication, office morale, productivity, and student satisfaction.

All deans and administrative managers of Virginia Western Community College who have or have not completed prior management training are the target audience for this study. When obtaining these positions they currently had to have

work experience or were promoted with very little to no training. There are three types of training methods offered to deans and administrative managers through the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Western Community College that this study evaluated: online (Knowledge Center), classroom (Virginia Certified Manager Program [VaCPM]) platform, and on-the-job training. The Knowledge Center, a computer-based training, offers a wide variety of online training and developmental opportunities designed to promote professional and personal growth (Xeroteres, 2006). The VaCPM, classroom training, is a broad-based management development program providing public professionals with training to maximize the effectiveness of government organizations (Vilcheck, 2009). As a part of a national consortium, this certificate program offers practitioner-oriented course work that builds upon management training programs offered through agencies, colleges, and universities. This curriculum uses the foundation of theory and applies it to practical problems facing the participant, their agency/department, and the Commonwealth. At the completion of each program level, participants have developed practical applications relevant to advancing the mission and objectives of their organizations. Those who complete the program will earn the national designation of Certified Public Manager (Vilcheck, 2009).

To date, the only additional training to the ones mentioned prior would be the placement with another experienced dean or administrative manager for one-on-one training. This experienced dean or administrative manager could be at Virginia Western Community College or another Community College within in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).They would shadow a current dean or

administrative manager until they felt they had an understanding of the job duties, which is usually one to two weeks. Other training that may occur along the way consists of general up-to-date seminars and memos of change to policies and procedures.

LIMITATIONS

Although this study may seem broad in scope, it utilized the following limitations. It was limited to:

1. The Deans and Administrative Managers at Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, Virginia.

2. The three training methods, which include online training, on-the-job training, and classroom training.

ASSUMPTIONS

When conducting research certain circumstances must be assumed. This study used the following assumptions:

1. Administrative Managers and Deans already have prior training and knowledge of the community college system.

2. Administrative Managers and Deans are concerned with the services students receive and the morale of their staff.

3. Various training methods used may or may not be appropriate for either the Administrative Managers or Deans.

PROCEDURES

This research was designed to determine the most effective delivery methods (online, on-the-job, or classroom training) for training deans and administrative managers to be better communicators and morale boosters of Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke, Virginia. To learn the current and preferred method of training, a survey targeting these methods was designed and distributed to all deans and administrative managers at Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke, Virginia.

The survey consisted of a series of questions related to the type of prior management training they had received and the method used; the current manager training method that is used; and which method of training they preferred. The administrative managers and deans were required to answer and rank these answers for effectiveness of past training methods, classroom, online, or on-the-job training, used within the organization. The results of the survey were then tabulated and analyzed to determine appropriate training methods for better communication and office morale for deans and administrative managers of Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke, Virginia.

DEFNITION OF TERMS

Following is a list of terms that were defined to provide a clearer understanding of the research project.

- **Administrative Manager** – Administrative managers are responsible for carrying out the functions deemed by the dean and follow state standards.

- **Appropriate** – Relative method for a task at hand.

- **CD-ROM** - (Compact Disc Read Only Memory) a compact disc format used to store programs and data files. Holding 650 MB or 700MB, the CD-ROM uses a different format for recording data than the audio CD (CD-DA), from which it evolved. In the 1990s, the CD-ROM rapidly replaced the floppy disk for software distribution (Definition of CD-ROM, 2009).

- **Online Training** – Training presented either on a CD-ROM disk or via the Internet.

- **Dean** – A dean is an administrator in charge of a division within the college.

- **Internet** - a worldwide system of computer networks; a network of networks in which users at any one computer can get information from any other computer (Glossary of Terms, 2009).

- **On-The-Job Training (OJT)** – One-on-one training, where there is one trainer and one trainee.

- **Refresher Training** – Training that is conduced periodically to maintain up-to-date knowledge on a specific level of expertise.

- **Virginia Certified Manager Program (VaCPM)** - A broad-based management development program, providing public professionals with training to maximize the effectiveness of government organizations. As a part of a national consortium, this certificate program offers practitioner-

oriented course work that builds upon management training programs offered through agencies, colleges, and universities (Vilcheck, 2009).

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This study looked at what were the effective training methods for administrative managers and deans at Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke, Virginia. The methods include classroom training, online training, or on-the-job training. A survey will be developed to determine the prior, preferred, and most effective training methods used to aid in improving communication, office morale, and student service.

Chapter II will provide a review of the literature concerning the different types of training methods and their effectiveness through current professionals, researchers, and authors. Chapter III presents the methods and procedures utilized in this research. In Chapter IV, the survey findings are presented. Finally, in Chapter V, the findings are summarized and conclusions along with recommendations are made.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many managers know the importance of delving into the deeper meaning of their organizations and their work. Business is not just about numbers; it is about people. Managers are realizing, now more than ever, how much it matters for them to be sensitive to the people who work with them and promote a feeling of community and caring. Today's managers have the greatest challenge of their careers before them. Therefore, they need to know which methods of training are going to benefit them in helping manage their employees better in communication and creating better office morale (Bruce, 2003).

This chapter will review three training methods used in training. They are: Classroom Training, Online Training, and On-the-job Training. Reviewing the literature on these training methods will help determine what methods might be more effective for deans and administrative managers.

Classroom Training

The traditional training style, the classroom, gathering everyone in a classroom and presenting the material, still leaps to the mind of most companies when training is needed. It might be a simple presentation-style lecture class or a full-blown class with lectures, hands-on exercises, and group projects. However, this traditional approach can be time-consuming and costly (Henderson, 2003). In a classroom setting, the trainer must establish an atmosphere or set the training environment so that people are ready to participate and learn. This does not

necessarily mean that everyone is committed to being an active participant, but it does bring the participants together where most will have an open and cooperative frame of mind, are not distracted, and are serious about their time and intellectual resources (Horner, 1998).

Online Training

Online Training is a convenient alternative to the classroom setting, providing equivalent substance and quality without the traditional constraints of time and place (Coveny, 2009). Though many people believe online training is a new phenomenon brought about by the spread of the Internet, the fact is that computer-based (online) training goes back about four decades, when large mainframe computers began to become a mainstay of government and business. In the 1960s, extensive programs were written for a variety of training or research purposes, with an emphasis on development of simulations and thinking tools. Furthermore, there was ample empirical evidence to show that those studying in this manner did achieve the objectives or training outcomes (Lynch, 2004).

Earlier technologies for training at a distance included CDROMs, audiotapes, and videotapes. But the Internet over-took them within a few years because of accessibility and familiarity (Henderson, 2003) as well as to enhance communication and information sharing (Lynch, 2004). What really impressed users was the capability to interact electronically, search through databases, and work together to solve problems without having to be in the same location (Lynch, 2004). Now

leading-edge companies are using online training to address their training needs for it allows their employees to:

- Take training courses for skill certification. These courses can be taken at the employees' convenience in bite-size pieces over weeks or months. This was the project management certification course in the example.

- Participate in regularly scheduled "live-update" training on products, processes, or other topics that are important to the business. This was the product-update training in the example.

- Take on-demand, self-directed training for short topics important to your business. Depending on the topic being taught, online training can be instructor-led or self-directed (without instructor) (Henderson, 2001).

Some online training is designed to be completed at scheduled times, and other kinds are completely unscheduled; trainees can take the course at their convenience. While online training comes in a variety of styles and sizes, all of the online training varieties share the goal of getting knowledge and skills training to employees more quickly, more effectively, and often at lower cost (Henderson, 2001). And because of the lower costs many companies are using online training in a big way; *Training Magazine* reports that corporations can save 50 to 70 percent of their overall training costs by replacing traditional training with online training (Henderson, 2001).

On-the-job Training

On-the-job training (OJT) comprises the assignment of a trainee with an experienced employee to learn the particular and precise skills of the job. This takes

place with new hires or those being transferred or promoted or when an individual lacks the knowledge or the skills to accomplish the job. The three most common methods of on-the-job training are Structured, Unstructured, and Job Instruction Training (Horner, 1998).

Structured OJT allows the trainee to gain skills and knowledge required to accomplish the job through a series of structured or planned supervised activities. The elements needed to competently undertake and meet the performance standards as well as the expectations are presented in an organized manner. Most Unstructured OJT activities are not completely planned and are done in a casual fashion. A common method of unstructured OJT is to have the trainee shadow another employee to see how the job is accomplished. This method often leads the trainee to pick up as much by trial and error as by any instruction given. The major drawback to an unstructured approach is that objectives, expectations, and outcomes are not defined in advance and, therefore, results are unpredictable (Horner, 1998).

Job Instruction Training (JIT) was first developed during World War II for production workers and was based on mechanical step-by-step procedures requiring the instructor to present the material in an orderly, disciplined manner. It is not frequently used in teaching motor skills, since there is a systematic approach to JIT. Components of it are often found in today's structured OJT initiatives (Horner, 1998).

Summary

Classroom training allows a business to bring their employees together in one place and provides them with the opportunity to meet others from their organization

to ensure they are all exposed to the same training. It brings the importance of the training to the employees. However, classroom training can be costly and time consuming causing employers to veer away from it especially with job cutbacks and budget cuts due to the 2009 economic recession.

Another training method discussed was online training. It allows a business and its employees to have the flexibility necessary to complete training at their convenience, anywhere, anytime, and anyplace. The biggest advantage to online training is that it is not as costly as that of classroom training for employers do not have to pay for lodging, room, food, or other costs that may be incurred from bringing employees together. It does not allow for the initial face-to-face contact that businesses like it for their employers to have to establish rapport with other employees.

Lastly, on-the-job training was introduced. It provides the business with three different types to choose: structured, unstructured, or JIT. All provide the trainee with the opportunity to learn from others before them in the office environment which they will be working. This method may be the least costly, but it does not always provide the best training.

Chapter III details the methods and procedures in how the research was conducted. An outline of the instrument used to collect the data is presented and the statistical methods developed to analyze the data are described.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter III explains the instrument used for the population surveyed, collection of data, and the process for achieving statistical results. This chapter also contains an outline of how the research was designed for this study.

POPULATION

The population consisted of thirty-two Deans and Administrative Managers located at Virginia Western Community College. Five deans and 27 administrative managers are presiding officials of the college, of faculty, of students, or of administrative staff. The views of these respondents were analyzed to determine the best training method to better office communication and morale at Virginia Western Community College.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The problem of this study was to determine the most effective delivery methods for training deans and administrative managers to be better communicators and morale boosters at Virginia Western Community College. This was being done for continued professional development and to create better office morale. To aid in possible solutions to this problem, a survey containing 28 questions was used to collect the data from five deans and 27 administrative managers of Virginia Western. The responses to the questions were separated into the ideal training tools preferred: classroom training, on-the-job training, or computer training.

Survey Questions 1 through 12 were written to discover what training methods were most effective in the areas of communication, office morale, human skills, human relations, and job instruction. Questions 13 through 28 were written to research aspects of how training should be administered and managed. An example of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Based upon research goals four survey questions (2, 7, 8, and 11) were specifically geared to measure the appropriate delivery method in communication, which supported Research Goal 1. Four questions (3, 9, 10 and 12) were designed to identify the training method best to enhance office morale, which supported Research Goal 2. A group of questions (13 – 18) were designed to identify what recommendations needed to be made in order to recommend the best training methods to support Research Goal 3.

The survey was reviewed by the STEM Education faculty at Old Dominion University. The faculty tested the survey for validity and made suggestions for improvement in order to collect sufficient data to utilize in addressing the research goals.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The purpose of this study was to determine the most effective delivery methods (classroom, online, or on-the-job training) for training deans and administrative managers to be better communicators and morale boosters at Virginia Western Community College. In July of 2009, a cover letter (Appendix B) explaining the reasons for the study, along with a copy of the survey were sent to each dean

and administrative manager at Virginia Western Community College. The letter included a request to return the survey no later than July 20, 2009.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Questions contained in the survey were analyzed using number and frequency of responses and the mean for each response provided by the deans and administrative managers at Virginia Western Community College.

SUMMARY

Chapter III presented the methods and procedures utilized in this study. The content reviewed the population, instrument design, methods of data collection, and the statistical analysis utilized in the study. With the increasing number of students at the college, the need for improving communication skills and office morale has been made evident at Virginia Western Community College. Therefore the 32 deans and administrative managers of Virginia Western Community College were provided with a survey to address these issues in hopes of developing recommendations of improvement.

The findings of the research were stated and revealed in Chapter IV. While the chapter contains a discussion of the response rate and reports the survey responses, it should be noted that the questions were grouped together to address each research goal. In addition, the open-ended questions were available to provide further explanation of the responses given to explain as to why the answer was chosen or extend thoughts on the question.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter will report the findings of this research study. The purpose of this study was to determine the most effective delivery methods for training deans and administrative managers to be better communicators and morale boosters at Virginia Western Community College. It was undertaken to provide continued professional development and create better office morale at the college.

The study consisted of a set of questions concerning the manner in which 5 deans and 27 administrative managers are trained in communication and office morale. The survey was forwarded to a combination of thirty-two deans and administrative managers of which twenty responded resulting in a 62.5% response rate. Table 1 shows the number of deans and administrative managers who participated in this study.

Table 1

Response Rate

Number Sent	Number Collected	Total Response Rate
32	20	62.5%

Training Methods

The three training methods researched through this study included Classroom, Computer based, and On-the-job Training. Questions 1 through 12 asked which training methods would be most effective in communication, office

morale, human skills, human relations, and job instruction. The results of the data collected for each of these questions are listed below.

Question 1 asked respondents to select what types of training methods they have previously participated. From the data collected, 20 (63%) respondents have participated in a computer-based program provided by Virginia Western known as the Knowledge Center. Seventeen respondents (53%) received on-the-job training. Only a few respondents, 3 (9%), had participated in a classroom based programs known as the Virginia Certified Manager Program. As noted in Figure 1, Virginia Western seems to utilize computer-based training methods more than classroom or on-the-job training methods, for 63% of the population have participated in the computer-based training programs offered.
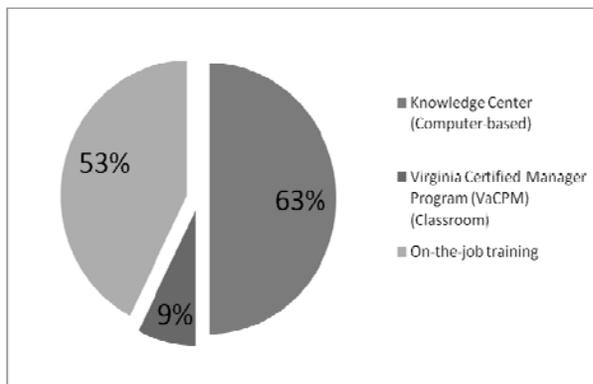

Figure 1. The training methods that are currently utilized at Virginia Western Community College.

Question 2 asked respondents to select the appropriate type of training method that would place adequate emphasis on developing managerial capabilities in communication. The data revealed 59% (n=19) prefers classroom training, 56% (n=18) on-the-job training, and 34% (n=11) prefer computer-based training. As identified in Figure 2, it appears that the majority of the population preferred a face-

to-face type training method than an impersonal training method such as, computer
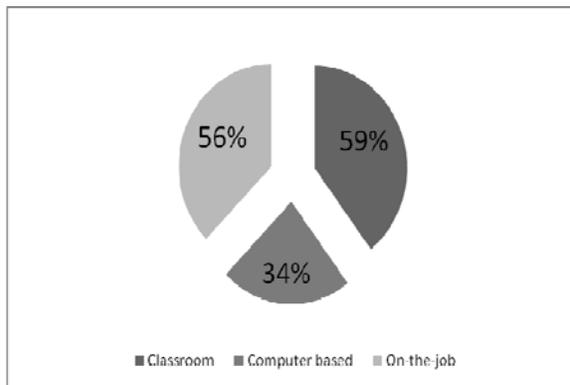
based training.

Figure 2. The training methods preferred in developing communication skills.

Question 3 asked respondents to select the appropriate type of training

method that placed adequate emphasis on developing managerial capabilities to

insure positive office morale. Forty-four percent of the population (n=14) preferred

classroom training, as well as on-the-job training, therefore identifying that once

again, the majority of the population preferred not to receive computer based

training. These results are identified in Figure 3.
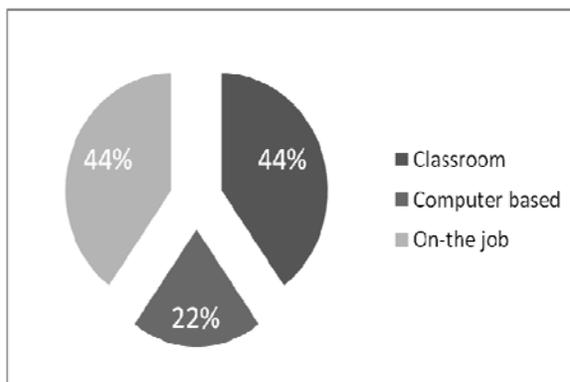

Figure 3. The training method preferred in developing office morale.

Question 4 asked respondents to select the appropriate type of training

method that they believed adequately develops an emphasis on human skills. Once

again computer-based training had the lowest percentage, 13% (4 respondents), of being the preferred training method. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey seemed to feel strongly that on-the-job training (53% or n=17) and classroom training (41% or n=13) are a better form of training in developing human skills. The results are identified in Figure 4.
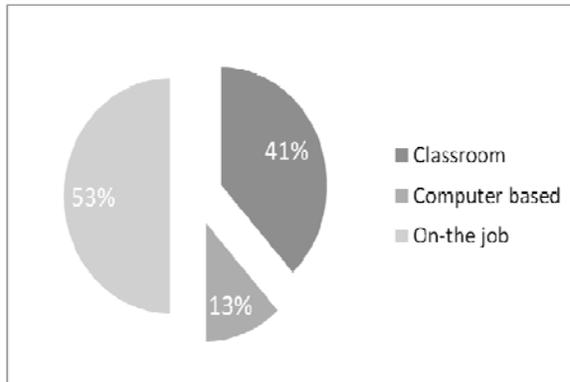

Figure 4. The training method preferred in developing in human skills.

Question 5 asked respondents to select the appropriate type of training method that they believed places emphasis on human relations competencies. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 17 (53%) selected on-the-job training, 12 (38%) selected classroom training, and 3 (9%) selected computer-based training. The majority of the population once again felt computer-based training was not the best method. These results are identified in Figure 5.
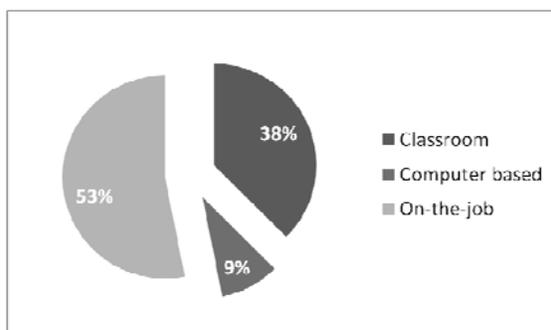

Figure 5. The training method preferred in developing human relations competencies.

Question 6 asked respondents to select the appropriate type of training method that they believed would be best for job instruction. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 11 (34%), selected on-the-job training, 4 (13%) selected computer-based training, and 3 (9%) selected classroom training. These results are identified in Figure 6 and differ a bit from the questions before because classroom training was identified as the non favored method of training instead of computer based training.

Figure 6. The training method determined to be the best for training in Job Instruction.

Question 7 asked respondents to compare each of the training methods and select the one which they believed would benefit them the most in improving upon communication with their employees. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 10 (31%) selected classroom training, 9 (28%) selected on-the-job training, and 3 (9%) selected computer-based training. These results are identified in Figure 7 with the computer based training falling at the lowest percentage of choice.
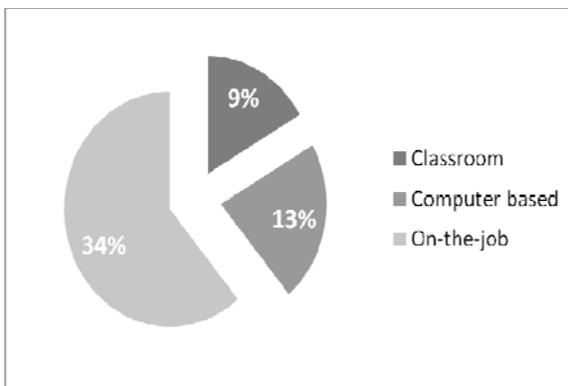
Figure 7. The training method determined to be the best for improving communication.

Question 8 asked respondents to compare each training method and select the one which they would take most seriously in communication training. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 14 (44%) selected classroom training, 5 (16%) on-the-job training, and only 1 (3%) selected computer-based training. As noted in Figure 8, computer based training received the lowest percentage of choice.

Figure 8. The training method taken more seriously in communication training.

Question 9 asked respondents to compare each training method and select the one which they believed would best benefit them the most in improving office morale. Ten respondents (31%) selected classroom, 8 (25%) selected on-the-job

training, and 2 (6%) selected computer-based training. These results are identified in Figure 9, with computer-based training receiving the lowest percentage.

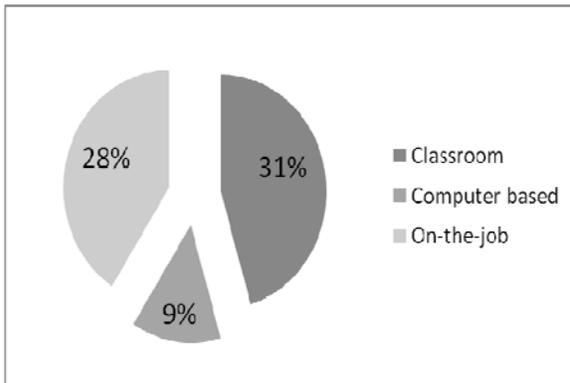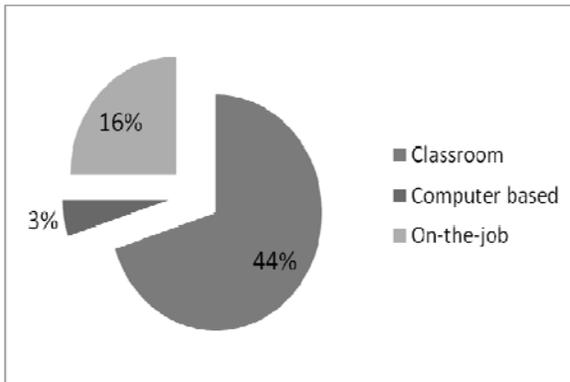*Figure 9. The training method that is determined to be the best for improving office morale*

Question 10 asked respondents to compare each training method and select the one which they would take more seriously in office morale training. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 11 (34%) selected on-the-job training, 8 (25%) selected classroom training, and 1 (3%) selected computer-based training. These results are identified in Figure 10, with once again computer based training receiving the lowest percentage of the population's choice.
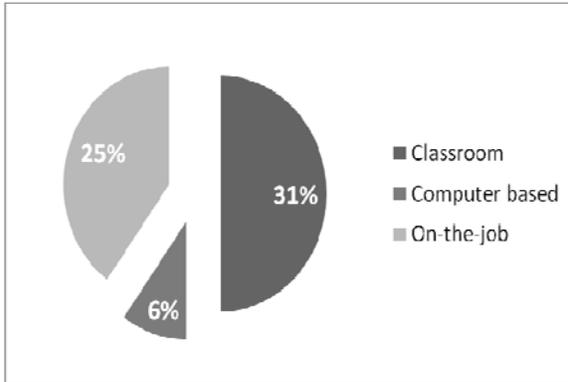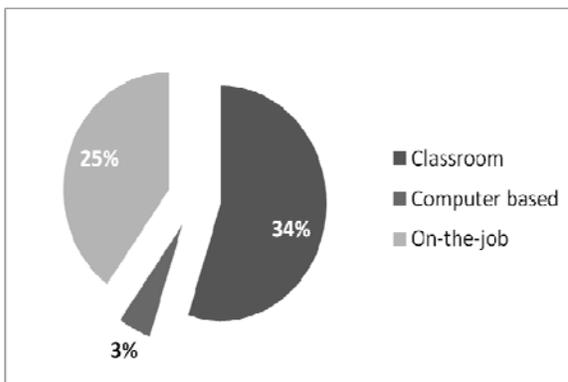

Figure 10. The training method taken more seriously when deans and administrative managers are training on office morale.

Question 11 asked respondents to compare each training method and select the method which they believed would be the most effective method in overall training of their position in communication. The population of the survey 8 (25%) selected classroom training, 7 (22%) selected on-the-job training, and 4 (13%) selected computer-based training. These results are identified in Figure 11 and although a few more of the population selected computer based training, it was still not the preferred choice.
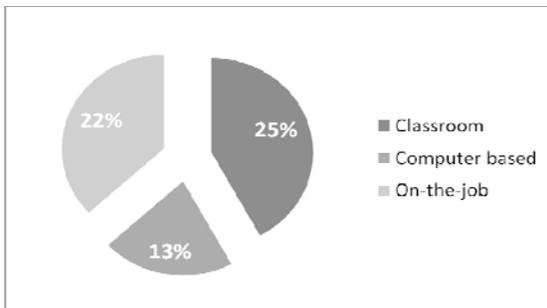
Figure 11. The most effective training method preferred in communication.

Question 12 asked respondents to compare each training method and select the one which they believed would be the most effective method in overall training of their position in office morale. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey 10 (31%) selected classroom training, 8 (25%) selected on-the-job training, and 2 (6%) selected computer-based training. These results are identified in Figure 12 with computer training falling short of being the choice.
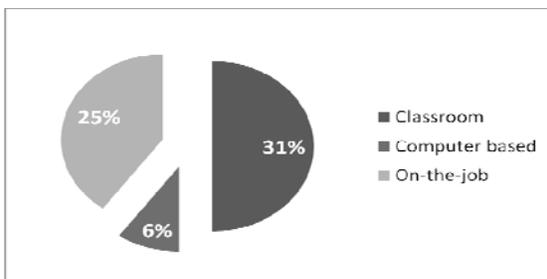
Figure 12. The most effective training method preferred in office morale.

Administration of Training

Questions 13 through 28 researched aspects of how training should be administered and managed. Question 13 asked respondents if new deans or administrative managers should train with more than one dean or administrative manager during on-the-job training. The majority of the population, 41% (n=13), answered yes, indicating that they felt on-the-job training should be implemented, where as 0 responded no and 19% (n=6) felt it did not matter as Figure 13 reveals.
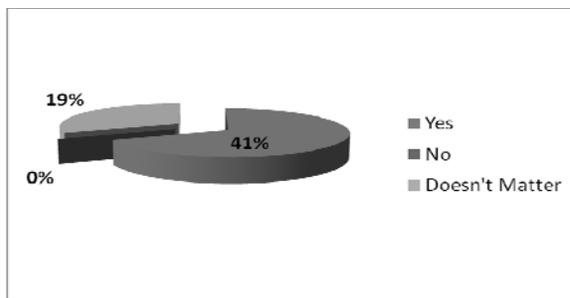
Figure 13. Deans and administrative managers favor on-the-job training with more than one professional.

Question 14 asked respondents what their recommendation for the minimum length of time trainees should receive on-the-job for communication training. Seven respondents (22%) felt that 4 weeks was the minimum time a trainee should receive, 4 respondents (13%) selected 2 weeks, 4 respondents (13%) selected other, and only 1 (3%) selected 3 weeks. See Figure 14.
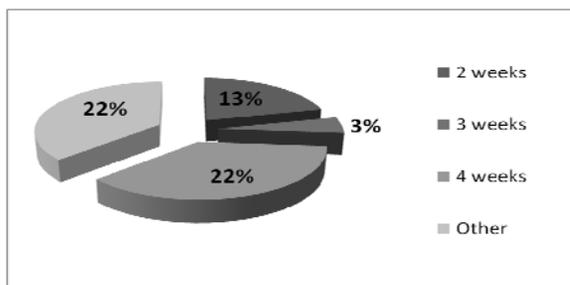
Figure 14.The minimum length of on-the-job training suggested for training deans and administrative managers in communication.

Question 15 asked respondents if a new dean or administrative manager trains with more than one trainer, what their recommendation for the minimum length of time they should receive for communication training. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 7 (22%) responded other, 5 (16%) responded 4 weeks, 4 (13%) responded 6 weeks, and 3 (9%) responded 8 weeks. Of those responding other, participants wrote in the following responses:

- 1 day
- 2 weeks
- Sporadically as needed-mentor based
- 3 days
- Continuous improvement
- 1 week
- 2 to 3 weeks

These results are identified in Figure 15.

Figure 15.The minimum length of time suggested when training with more than one dean or administrative manager for communication.

Question 16 asked respondents what they recommended for the minimum length of time trainees should receive on-the-job training for office morale training. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 7 (22%)

responded 2 weeks, 7 (22%) responded other, 3 (9%) responded 4 weeks, and 1

(3%) responded 3 weeks. Of those responding other participants wrote in the

following responses:

- Two weeks, then on a regular on-going basis
- 1 day
- 1 week
- Sporadically as needed-mentor based
- 2 days
- Continuous improvement

These results are identified in Figure 16.
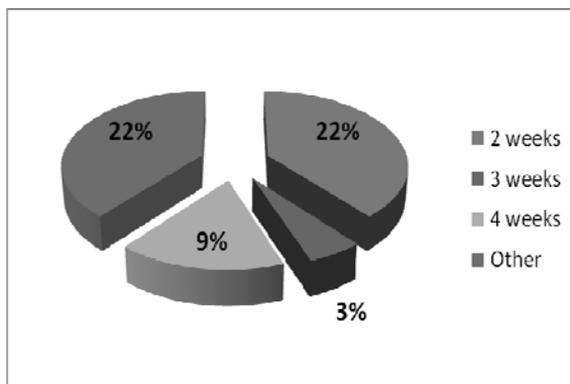
Figure 16.The minimum time length preferred for on-the-job training in office morale

Question 17 asked respondents if a new dean or administrative manager

trains with more than one trainer, what were their recommendations for the minimum

length of time they should receive office morale training. The deans and

administrative managers participating in the survey, 9 (28%) responded 4 weeks, 7

(22%) responded other, 1 (3%) responded 6 weeks, and 2 (6%) responded 8 weeks.

Of those responding other participants wrote in the following responses:

- 1 day
- 2 weeks

- Sporadically as needed-mentor based

- 3 days

- Continuous improvement

- 1 week

- 2 to 3 weeks

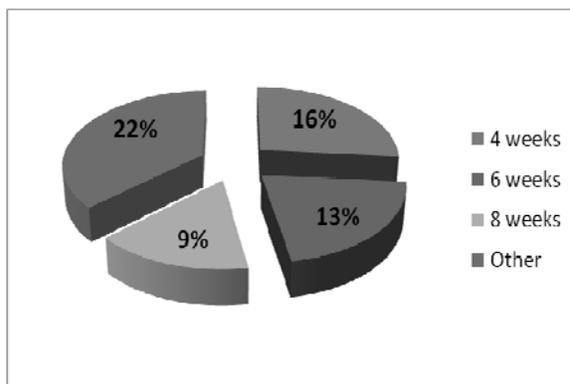These results are identified in Figure 17.
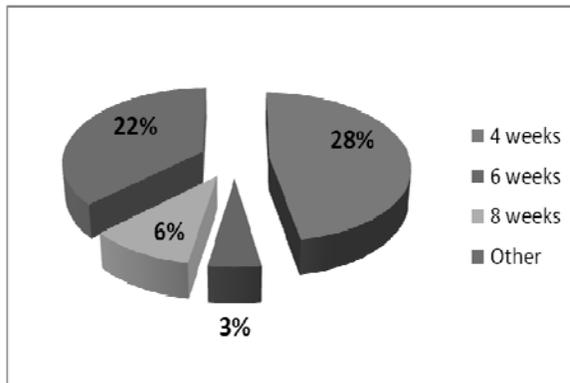
Figure 17.The minimum length of time suggested when training with more than one dean or administrative manager in office morale.

Question 18 asked respondents how they would determine when the new dean or administrative manager is ready to "fly solo" or perform their job duties on their own. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 8 (25%) responded Oral Questions, no one selected Written Test, 3 (9%) responded Practical Test, and 8 (25%) responded combination specifying:

- Oral and through job performance

- Oral questions, evaluations, practical observation

- No test, on job use-mentor

- Oral practical observation

- Oral and practical

- Ready upon appointment; need continuous feedback

- Their supervisor

- Oral and practical

These results are identified in Figure 18.
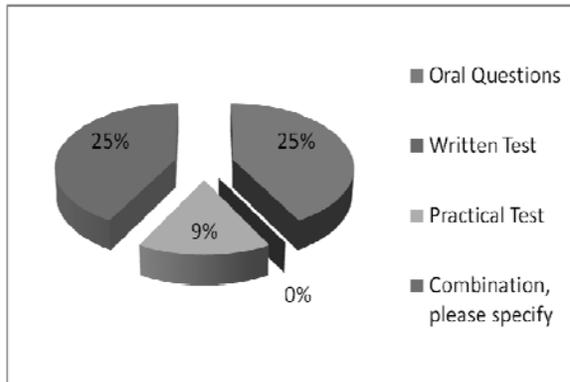
Figure 18. Determining when to a Dean or Administrative Manager is ready to "fly solo".

Question 19 asked respondents how often deans or administrative managers should re-qualify their position to maintain their expertise? The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 9 (28%) responded annually, 9 (28%) responded other, 1 (3%) responded every 6 months, and of those selecting other, they specified the following:

- This should be on-going in a variety of methods.

- Never if competent

- When their job performance slacks off

- Not a matter of re-qualifying but continual growth

- Every two years

- I need more space to specify – do not agree with question

- These are professionals that do not need to qualify

- It would depend on how "hands-on" they were

- At the supervisor's discretion

These results are identified in Figure 19.
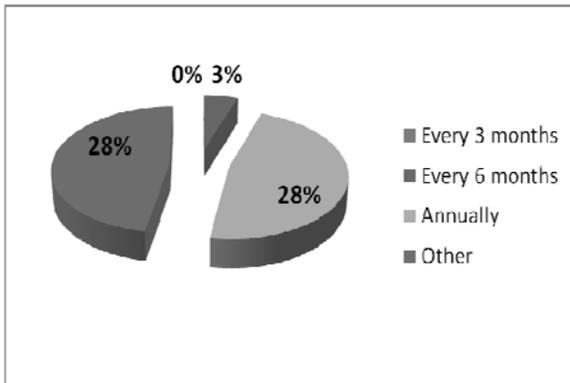
Figure 19. How often to be re-qualified as a Dean or Administrative Manager to maintain expertise.

Question 20 asked respondents how they related the quality of in-company programs at Virginia Western Community College that they have participated. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 10 (31%) selected fair, 7 (22%) selected good, 2 (6%) specified that it was too time consuming or that there was too many of them, and 1 (3%) selected poor. These results are identified in Figure 20.
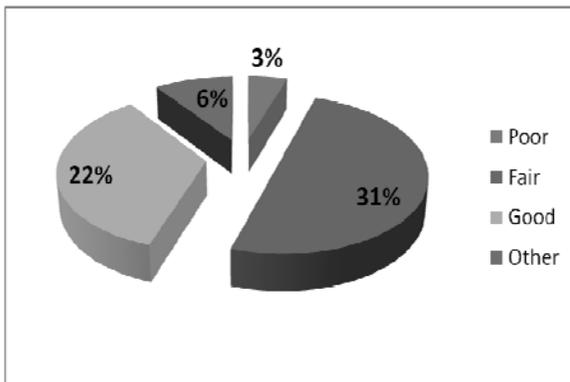
Figure 20. Rating of current VWCC programs have previously to part in.

Question 21 asked respondents if they were given adequate free time to reflect and plan improvements within their department/division when returning from a training session. The population of deans and administrative managers, 25% (n=8)

responded no, 22% (n=7) responded sometimes, 13% (n=4) responded yes, and 3% (n=1) specified too much work-no reflection time.

Question 22 asked respondents if it would be more effective if they were given free time to reflect and plan improvements within their department/division when returning from a training session. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 6 (19%) responded yes, 6 (19%) responded sometimes, 4 (13%) responded no, and 3 (9%) specified that it was unrealistic, great concept but not practical.

Question 23 asked respondents if they felt there is a well-designed and widely shared training policy at Virginia Western Community College. The deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 38% (n=12) responded no and 25% (n=8) responded yes.

Question 24 asked respondents if they answered yes to Question 23 to indicate what training program they were referring to and the answers were as follows:

- If there is one, it is not known.
- HR Training programs, Educational Assistance and Continuous Learning.
- I feel an effort is put into a training plan, but I do not think HR has a clue what our jobs are like and how unrealistic some of the training expectations are. Some of the outside speakers are good, but some of the in house efforts take too much time for the product offered.
- Knowledge Center.
- Widely shared, yes. We need more time for faculty to share best practices in the classroom, information sessions on financial aid and

how faculty can help students, and opportunities for departments/programs to develop new initiatives.

- More consideration as to what would really be helpful rather than fulfilling auditor's requirements.

- A comprehensive well communicated program with an annual agenda with dates/times, the manager can plan ahead to attend or send employees to training.

- Not enough funding for training!

- Individual training plans with deadline dates. Emphasis on building a learning community instead of authoritative requests.

- Mandatory state employee training.

- Customer Services (however, it needs to be more condensed).

- Knowledge Center/On-the-Job Training.

- There are enough various training requirements that a day should be set aside similar to what faculty receive, for staff to do nothing but all the training that's required within the year.

- Reminders that this option is available for employee to utilize.

- Knowledge Center and Supervisory Roundtable Programs.

- Many areas need to be reviewed and updates provided annually: travel policies and procedures; HR policies and procedures – timesheets, leave policies, hiring of employees to include student workers, IT skills workshops (mandatory).

Question 25 asked respondents if they felt that they had received adequate training before entering their position. Of the deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 14 (44%) responded yes, and 6 (19%) responded no. When asked to specify why or why not, the 5 (16%) responded with the following statements:

- Not for every aspect of the job.

- This is not a position that can really be trained.

- Need time for orientation, and did not receive.

- OJT was expected.
- Had on the job training but a great supervisor.

Question 26 asked respondents if they felt that they are receiving adequate training for their current position. Of the deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 16 (50%) selected yes, and 3 (9%) selected no. When asked to specify why or why not, 4 (13%) responded with the following statements:

- They are still determining exact duties.
- On-the-job training worked in the area.
- Through attending professional development and peers.
- Supervisor encourages training opportunity and conferences.

Question 27 asked respondents to list what type of training they would need to help make them and their employee better at their job and to explain. Of the deans and administrative managers participating in the survey, 6 (19%) selected on-the-job training, 1 (3%) selected computer-based training, 5 (16%) selected classroom training, and 13 (41%) selected all the above. When asked why, 11 (34%) responded with the following statements:

- A combination will suit all needs.
- All methods of training have specific validity.
- Each method has its unique degree of effectiveness.
- Personal interaction, shared experiences.
- Need to adjust to the various learning styles.
- Diverse learners with diverse learning needs!
- Quality and pertinent training should be ongoing.
- Give time and then getting our real job done.

- I relate better to personal interaction.

- Need additional computer skill training.

- I like all the above – everyone learns differently.

Question 28 asked respondents to please provide any additional comments. Those deans and administrative managers participating in the survey stated the following:

- Training for trainings sake can waste time.

- Survey questions repeat, misspellings, questionnaire assumes training is end in itself or vital to being a good manager. This may not be the right assumption…read Dewey, Goldman, Steven, Covey, etc.

- Computer based initiatives are ok for basic information sessions. Personally, I prefer interaction and sharing best practices.

- I think VWCC should do a better job of encouraging its employees to attend any and all training. To make employees feel they can participate, there should be others in an office or division that can cover for folks so everyone that wants to attend can. I think many folks feel they cannot be "out of the office" when training opportunities are offered and no employee that wants training should feel that way.

SUMMARY

Chapter IV presented the data from 62.5% (n=20) of the population. The data were collected and summarized. The questions addressed what training method was more appropriate when training deans and administrative managers effectively on office morale and communication. Additionally, the respondents were able to offer opinions on how the training methods should be administered and were able to expand on certain responses by writing in their opinion.

Based on the data collected it appears the majority of the population would prefer on-the-job and classroom training as opposed to that of computer-based. This identifies that the population felt that face-to-face contact and interaction was a better form of training in communications and office morale than sitting in front of a computer. When administering training for those being promoted or assuming the position of a dean or administrative manager, these individuals preferred an adequate amount of on-the-job training in order for them to be more effective in their position in creating good communication skills and office morale throughout their division or department. Chapter V will summarize these findings along with the other research, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The increase in student population has made it evident to deans and administrative managers that the need to enhance the quality of their leadership exists. This study was developed to establish the best training method that Virginia Western should utilize to increase communication, office morale, productivity, and student satisfaction. This chapter includes a summary of the study and its population, a conclusion as to what the data collected presents, and recommendations as to what delivery method or methods would best suit the needs of training deans and administrative managers at Virginia Western Community College.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the most effective delivery methods for training deans and administrative managers to be better communicators and morale boosters at Virginia Western Community College. It was undertaken for continued professional development and creating better office morale. To address this problem, a survey was generated and dispersed to a population of 32 deans and administrative managers.

A cover letter explaining the reasons for the study, along with a copy of the survey, were sent to each dean and administrative manager at Virginia Western Community College. With the information collected the study reviewed what training methods would be most effective to enhance office morale and communication skills.

The findings were based on 62.5% response rate of the population surveyed and focused on the preferred training methods to meet these needs. It was found that on-the-job and classroom training was preferred to that of computer based training. This identified that the population felt that face-to-face contact and interaction was a better form of training in communication and office morale than that of sitting in front of a computer.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data collected, the following conclusions were developed for each of the research goals. The first research goal was to determine appropriate delivery methods (classroom, online, or on-the-job training) for training deans and administrative managers in communication. The majority of the population preferred classroom (37%) and on-the job training (30%) over computer based training (12%). The data suggested that computer-based training would be difficult to convey communication skills when you do not have that person-to-person contact. As revealed in the data collected, computer based training received the lowest percentile, 31%, on-the-job training was the preferred choice by 40%, and classroom was the second choice at 15% for the training method of choice in communication training.

The second research goal was to determine appropriate delivery methods (classroom, online, or on-the-job training) for training deans and administrative managers in enhancing office morale. The compiled data for this goal were similar to that of Question 1, in that classroom (35%) and on-the-job training (30%) received

the higher percentages. This could further be interpreted to mean that to develop the skills to increase office morale, classroom or on-the-job training methods need to be utilized as supported by the 9% who believed that computer-based training was not the best approach.

The third research goal was to recommend training methods, classroom, online, or on-the-job training, for deans and administrative managers at Virginia Western Community College. The consensus was that each method of training has its unique degree of effectiveness to meet diverse learning needs that a combination of training methods would best serve these needs. The percentages for on-the-job (30%) and classroom (37%) training were higher in training effectiveness in communication and office morale. This suggested many persons learned differently, therefore designing a training program which encompasses each of these methods would be more effective when training deans and administrative managers in communication and improving office morale. They would receive the personal interaction that comes with classroom training, the specific knowledge that on-the-job training provides, and obtain skills necessary at their own pace through computer training.

When deans and administrative managers completed their training, the manner in which they demonstrated their knowledge of materials was usually through standardized performance reviews. However, the overall results from the research suggested that a mixture of oral questions, evaluation, practical observation, and continuous feedback after training would be a better way to insure they were ready to "fly solo" or work by themselves. Additionally, the length of

training should be varied from one day to three weeks, with many (28%) stating that

to insure continuous improvement in their jobs training should be received on a

regular basis after the initial training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions, training for deans and administrative managers

at Virginia Western Community College can be enhanced by providing the

necessary time to utilize professional development and other training activities in

which they may attend to have the personal interactions that classroom training

provides. In addition, continuous on-the-job training should be provided as well to

insure a well developed training program. Computer training can be used for

understanding and updates. Moreover, a combination of classroom and on-the-job

training seems to be a better mix than that of just computer-based training.

In order to develop the existing training methods, the following

recommendations were made:

1. Establish a more defined training procedure for deans and

    administrative manager that is a combination of classroom and on-the

    job training.

- Establish a comprehensive, well communicated training

  procedure for each dean and administrative manager to include

  dates, times, and specific job skills topics.

- Formulate a job rotation with each division for a dean or

  administrative manager to participate in, to expose them to

  different office techniques and environments.

- Develop an evaluation procedure for each stage of training. This

  will provide a way to note strengths and weakness along the

  way.

2. Allow adequate time for training.

- Establish a training policy that specifies the training time

  necessary to meet a training need.

- Arrange for office coverage in order to release the dean or

  administrative manager to attend a training event.

- Set aside time for trainees to reflect and plan to implement the

  learned practices.

3. Consider outside sources to meet training needs.

- Arrange for a consultant to perform day-to-day observations of how a dean or administrative manager conducts business and provide job specific ways to improve office morale and communication skills.

- Seek outside sources to provide an additional means of training utilized to develop knowledge in communication among your employees and how office environment affects office morale.

4. Perform continuous training.

- Ensure deans and administrative managers make continued progress in improving the communication skills necessary to create a better office environment.

Based on this research, an improved training plan for Virginia Western Community College deans and administrative managers would help them to improve office morale and develop the communication skills needed to better serve the increasing and changing student population. Although computer training is an acceptable training method in learning or refreshing some skills, the study revealed that a combination of classroom and on-the-job training would be the best fit for effective training to improve office morale and communication skills. The results of

this study supported the introduction that the current training methods in place at Virginia Western Community College may not be the most effective to increase communication and office morale. Additionally, continuous training was necessary to maintain the leadership quality of the deans and administrative managers, which would increase communication, office moral, productivity, and student satisfaction.

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APPENDIX A

Deans and Administrative Managers Training Survey

Virginia Western Community College

Purpose: This questionnaire is intended to assess your thoughts in determining the best training methods for managers. In addition, this survey will assist in identifying a possible time frame in which to perform training.

Instruction: Circle the appropriate letter that indicates your preference in the multiple-choice section.

Training Methods:

> **Classroom:** A group comes together as a whole to train through lecturing and information is revealed to them using hands on training at scheduled times.

> **Computer based:** A computer based program that delivers information systematically with the use of video, audio, and graphics, with questions and answers relating to the topic, available on your time.

> **On-the-job:** A pairing of an experience dean or administrative manager with a less experienced dean or administrative manager conducting a training session one-on-one.

Questions:

1. Select what types of training methods that are listed below that you have participated.
   a. Knowledge Center (Computer-based)
   b. Virginia Certified Manager Program (VaCPM) (Classroom)
   c. On-the-job training

2. Select the appropriate type of training method that places adequate emphasis on developing managerial capabilities in communication.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

3. Select the appropriate type of training method that places adequate emphasis on developing managerial capabilities insuring positive office morale.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

4. Select the appropriate type of training method that you believe adequately develops an emphasis on human skills.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

5. Select the appropriate type of training method that you believe places emphasis on human relations competencies.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

6. Select the appropriate type of training method that you believe would be best for job instruction.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

7. Compare each of the training methods and select the one, which you believe would benefit you the most in improving upon communication.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

8. Compare each training method and select the one, which you would take most seriously in communication training.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

9. Compare each of the training methods and select the one, which you believe would benefit you the most in improving office morale.

a. Classroom
b. Computer based
c. On-the-job

10. Compare each training method and select the one, which you would take most seriously in office morale training.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

11. Compare each training method and select which model would be most effective in overall training of your position in communication.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

12. Compare each training method and select which model would be most effective in overall training of your position in office morale.
   a. Classroom
   b. Computer based
   c. On-the-job

13. During on-the-job training, should new deans or administrative manager's train with more than one dean or administrative manager?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Does Not Matter

14. For new deans and administrative managers, what is your recommendation for the *minimum* length of time trainees should receive on-the-job training for communication training?
   a. 2 weeks
   b. 3 weeks
   c. 4 weeks
   d. Other _____

15. If a new dean or administrative manager trains with more than one trainer, what is your recommendation for the *minimum* length of time they should receive for communication training?
   a. 4 weeks

b. 6 weeks

c. 8 weeks

16. For new deans and administrative managers, what is your recommendation for the *minimum* length of time trainees should receive on-the-job training for office morale training?
    a. 2 weeks
    b. 3 weeks
    c. 4 weeks
    d. Other _____

17. If a new dean or administrative manager trains with more than one trainer, what is your recommendation for the *minimum* length of time they should receive for office morale training?
    a. 4 weeks
    b. 6 weeks
    c. 8 weeks
    d. Other _____

18. How would you determine when the new dean or administrative manager is ready to "fly solo"?
    a. Oral Questions
    b. Written Test
    c. Practical Test
    d. Combination _____

19. How often should deans or administrative managers re-qualify their position to maintain their expertise?
    a. Every 3 months
    b. Every 6 months
    c. Annually
    d. Other _____

20. As a dean or administrative manager how do you rate the quality of in-company programs at Virginia Western Community College that you have participated in?
    a. Poor
    b. Fair
    c. Good
    d. Other _____

21. When returning from a training session, are you given adequate free time to reflect and plan improvements within your department/division?
   a. yes
   b. no
   c. sometimes
   d. Other _____

22. When returning from a training session would you feel it would be more effective if you were given free time to reflect and plan improvements within your department/division?
   a. yes
   b. no
   c. sometimes
   d. Other _____

23. Do you feel there is a well-designed and widely shared training policy at Virginia Western Community College?
   a. yes
   b. no

24. If you answered yes to number 17, please indicate what training program you are referring.
   _____

25. Do you feel that you have received adequate training before entering your position?
   a. yes
   b. no

   Why are why not? _____
   _____

26. Do you feel that you receive adequate training for your position now?
   a. yes
   b. no

   Why are why not? _____
   _____

27. Please list what type of training you would need to help make you and your employees better at their job and why?
    a. Classroom
    b. Computer based
    c. On-the-job
    d. All of the above

    Why? _____
    _____

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for providing your responses to the training within Virginia Western Community College.

APPENDIX B

June 11, 2009

Dear Dean and/or Administrative Manager:

Training is a very important part of maintaining employee growth through good communication and office morale within Virginia Western Community College. As the student population continues to grow and economics continues to fall, it is imperative that training is used efficiently and effectively to maximize employee performance.

The following survey has been designed to gather your thoughts on what training methods you feel would best meet this need. This survey will be conducted through Zoomerang to insure confidentiality. Your name will not be requested and once you hit submit your results will be forwarded to me as a number within a total and not individually identifiable. This survey is part of my graduate degree program that I am pursuing with Old Dominion University and has been approved by Dr. Robert Sandel, VWCC President. Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey by June 22, 2009, at this website http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=U2CEENAT4BQR. If you have any questions please contact me through email, lstevens@virginiawestern.edu or phone (540) 857-7216. Thank you very much for your participation and helping me to complete my Masters in Business and Industry Training.

Best Regards,

Laura J. Stevens

Professional Workforce Center Representative
Virginia Western Community College