

Ohio University  
College of Education  
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**DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

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**Technology and Training: The Role of Computers in the Skill Development of Adults in a Welfare-to-Work Program**

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**Director of Dissertation:** Sandra V. Turner, Ph.D.

The study examines the role of computers in the skill development of adults on welfare. The study investigates the significance of computers as motivational and instructional tools, the perception of the participants about computers and the importance of computer skills in job placement.

The study employed the qualitative methods of in-depth interviews and observation to gather data in the field. There were fifteen participants in the study, ten of whom were welfare recipients (students) enrolled in an adult basic skill development program, while the rest consisted of teachers and administrators in the program. Student interviewees were equally divided between computer users and non-computer users.

Information gathered shows that the computer is not a major factor in motivating the participants in their learning of basic skills. According to the students, unlike the teachers and administrators, the medium of instruction is less important than the content. Several students even found the computers to be an add-on to their learning. They pointed out that computers can make them less independent in learning, for example, when they need assistance in using software or solving technical problems.

There is unanimous agreement among all participants about the significance of computer skills for employment. All participants are of the opinion that computer experience is important in obtaining employment. Different students' attitudes towards computers are influenced by such factors as prior experience with computers, access to computers, anxiety in using computers, and costs of a computer at home. Overall, students, teachers and administrators have positive attitudes towards computers and recognize the potential of computers in instructional activities and at the workplace.