

THE ROLE OF SECRETARIES IN TRAINING
COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

As technology continues to affect the workplace, many job responsibilities of employees continue to change. The secretarial field seems to be a continual reflection of the advancement of technology. The traditional secretary's role is evolving into an office systems specialist. Today's office systems specialist is expected to be proficient in the most current computer software applications, as well as, cutting-edge hardware technologies.

Role changes in the secretarial field can be largely attributed to company downsizing. Recently, secretaries have been taking over responsibilities of middle managers who have been eliminated because of company downsizing and restructuring. These newly added responsibilities sometimes require secretaries to do the job of two or more people. Due to rapidly changing technology, secretaries have also found themselves training co-workers and others on computer technologies.

A study conducted by the Administrative Development Institute (1994) has shown that even though secretaries have been performing many additional tasks not traditionally performed by persons in these positions, they have not received much recognition for the newly added responsibilities. Few secretaries are receiving raises in salary for added duties. Considering all of the new tasks secretaries are expected to accomplish, there is still a great lack of training to help them become proficient in their new duties.

Alexander (1996) surveyed Professional Secretaries International members and found that over one-quarter of the respondents are training co-workers to use computer hardware, and almost half are training co-workers to use computer software. She also reported that respondents indicated that their supervisors consider training part of the respondent's job, but few had training responsibilities included in their job description.

This research project replicates the research conducted by Alexander (1996) who surveyed Professional Secretaries International (PSI) members to examine the secretary's role in training co-workers on computer technologies.

Data on varying types of support staff would be useful in determining possible trends evolving in job expectations for support staff.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe the role of OSS II and III at SIUC in training others on computer technologies/applications. This information can be useful to supervisors and administrators when writing job descriptions and creating new positions for the office personnel. Also, the research can be useful in making employers aware of the effect of technology on the office environment and roles of their personnel.

Statement of the Problem

To what extent are Office Systems Specialists II and III (OSS II and III) at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) involved in providing training on

computer technologies/applications to others?

Research Questions

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC:

1. On computer hardware configurations?
2. Relating to computer software applications:
 - a. Word processing
 - b. Spreadsheets
 - c. Databases
 - d. Presentation
 - e. Graphics/desktop publishing
 - f. Specialized
3. Relating to computer file management?
4. Relating to internet/electronic mail functions?
5. Relating to university-wide system functions?
6. Relating to method of delivery?
7. Relating to different categories of individuals?

Delimitations/Limitations

This study was delimited to a sample of Office Systems Specialist II and III on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC). Therefore, it did not determine all of the factors in the nature of training provided by secretaries in the

workforce. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to the population of secretaries on other campuses or in the workforce.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, these definitions were used:

Computer Application: a combination of functions developed to perform tasks on a computer. Application is another name for computer software.

Computer Technologies: any feature or function of a computer related to software and hardware.

Others: any who the OSS II or III may have contact with in their everyday work setting.

Training: any method used to educate another individual on a specific task or subject. These methods can include explaining, showing, demonstrating, instructing, coaching, and teaching.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

The problem of the study was to determine to what extent Office Systems Specialists II and III at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) are involved in providing training on computer technologies/applications?

This literature review is presented in two categories: (a) The Changing Role of Secretary, and (b) Research on the Changing Role of Secretary.

The Changing Role of Secretary

According to Stone (1994), the secretary's role is changing based on the respect they are beginning to receive for their knowledge of new office systems. Managers have come to realize the level of education, training and knowledge the jobs require.

Dentzer (1994) reported corporate restructuring and downsizing has wiped out tens of thousands of middle managers and often the secretaries who worked alongside them. Meanwhile, the remaining jobs have been drastically "upskilled". Thousands of secretaries now work the latest software or organize data and systems for an entire office. Kerka (1995) noted that secretaries are under increased workloads and are assuming duties previously performed by management.

Additionally, Stone (1995) stated that in today's downsized workplace, executives are finding their "to-do" lists too long and delegate some of their administrative and

managerial tasks to their secretaries and other office professionals. She also noted that many office professionals welcome the opportunity to take new challenges. But with increased responsibilities and workloads, motivational problems are emerging.

Secretaries feel that managers have failed to keep up their end of the bargain. They haven't provided secretaries with training or instructed staff members to cooperate so they can complete assignments.

The increasing responsibilities being assumed by secretaries are necessitating higher education and training, but formal training for technology and managerial/supervisory duties is somewhat lacking (Kerka, 1995). Waldrop (1994) reported, "about half of Professional Secretaries International (PSI) members say they are frustrated by the lack of training available, and 62 percent of secretaries say computer training would benefit them most" (p. 4).

Wilde (1995) presented an industry-wide lack of commitment to training. She reported that some management would rather hire contractors and pay them an hourly rate instead of training their own people. It does not seem cost effective, and good people leave because they see a lack of opportunity to develop their skills.

Stone (1995) stated that new responsibilities demand a return to the classroom. A lack of time or budget is not an adequate excuse when balanced against the return of higher productivity when office professionals are allowed to fully utilize their potential. "While technology gives some secretaries greater responsibility, it also lessens demand for some clerical jobs" (Waldrop, 1994, p. 4).

Farnham (1997) wrote about a chairman of an investment company who fired 85

secretaries on his 600-person payroll four and a half years ago. Neither he nor anyone else in the investment company employs a secretary. Though secretaries still make up about 17% of office support staff, the single biggest component, their numbers have declined by about one-fifth over the past decade. And of those who survived, most find themselves the first one being asked to take on tasks once handled by displaced middle managers. The chairman reported that one of the reasons that the secretaries have been eliminated was the fact that software now lets executive do for themselves much of what a secretary once did. After the release of the secretaries, the company's productivity dipped briefly. Then it recovered as managers adjusted to doing their own clerical work. Each adapted in his/her own way. Some say they cope by letting nonessential tasks such as sending a cover letter slide. Technology is helping to ease withdrawal.

Munk (1997) recently reported that the supply of highly qualified secretaries is dwindling even while the demand is soaring. She questioned "Isn't increased demand at rising prices supposed to coax forth increased supply" (p. 39)? She claimed that bright young women have been persuaded to think that secretarial work is demeaning. So women crowd into law schools only to graduate into an overcrowded profession, while secretarial jobs at good pay go begging.

Research shows that today's secretaries operate more like information managers rather than "coffee-fetching gofers". Successful secretaries have adapted to the Information Age by expanding their job skills. They realize that knowledge is power ("Male secretaries," 1996, p. 90).

Research on the Secretary's Changing Role

Marino (1993) conducted research to describe administrative support personnel's self-reports of skill level and job characteristics. She also identified the relationship between skill level and job characteristics as perceived by administrative support staff using information technologies. Marino (1993) said "While these support workers reported perceptions of moderately high amounts of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback in their jobs, findings indicated that respondents perceived their jobs to provide opportunities for job enrichment" (p. 121). Marino concluded by stating that despite the promise that technology will expand the roles of support personnel, findings suggest that organizations are not using information technology to change the jobs of these support workers.

North and Worth's (1997) research on workplace competencies found that in 1995 more than four-fifths of the entry-level classified advertisements in both the business and professional areas included technology skills. Therefore, office systems professionals and educators should continue to develop and focus on these skills.

A survey conducted by the Administrative Development Institute (1994) with members of Professional Secretaries International (PSI) found that 71% of the secretaries were taking on duties that had previously been performed by management, which included purchasing office materials, hiring personnel, training and supervising, and implementing/ supervising quality management programs. As a result of gaining these additional duties, many secretaries have increased enthusiasm for their job. At the same time, however, many of those surveyed feel overwhelmed by their large workload, and

are now working the equivalent of two or more positions. Although, respondents reported gaining more recognition and respect for their contributions, few have received promotions.

Weaver's (1996) research on downsizing proved that for the past decade organizations across the United States were forced to change in order to compete in a global economy. Downsizing is still practiced today but organizations are realizing the implications rapid change and a reduction in the workforce can have on their future success and survival. Companies have learned that downsizing disrupts the organization and they must cope with the aftereffects in order to survive. When researching the aftereffects, Weaver found evidence that organizations that invest in training, following a downsizing, have an increase in profits and productivity.

Durand, Keith, and Kim (1994) found that the business environments have become more uncertain and information processing has become more complex than ever. Their research proves that computer proficiencies have become an important asset for all levels of business.

Research conducted by Cochrane, Hart and Morris (1996) found that the major trend influencing the work environment today is the training and development of the nation's workforce. They stated that technology is expected to play a much larger role in delivering training of all types. Cochrane et al. (1996) concluded by explaining the industry's need for end-user learning, and universities' obligation to provide programs to prepare students for the roles in training.

Sullivan (1994) conducted a study to determine if the manner in which university-

educated administrative support personnel are required to use computer-based technology results in deskilling. Sullivan commented, "Results indicated that computers did not deskill, but rather enhanced variety, learning, creativity, responsibility and autonomy on the job" (p. 25).

James (1996) stated that technology is creating an unstable environment for business and academia. She expressed the need to develop methods for keeping abreast of new technologies and finding out about the potential power of each technological application. Her research focused on how academia may approach the teaching of technology to increasingly adept students. She recommended using the teacher as a facilitator and bringing in experts regularly.

In a study done by Alexander (1995), research was conducted to determine the techniques of computerized information organization used by office personnel. She also wanted to determine how organization leads to computer enjoyment. Alexander (1995) reported "A total of 404 office personnel completed a questionnaire that provided a profile of the respondents, their computer usage, and the computer information organizational techniques used. Demographics variables were compared to computer organizational techniques and computer enjoyment" (p. 21). Computer organizational techniques were then compared to computer enjoyment. Her study found that the majority of office personnel enjoyed working with computers. Results also indicated that office personnel who had worked on the computer for longer periods of years and who spent more hours per day on the computer were significantly more organized with both internal and external capabilities.

More recently, Alexander (1996) conducted a study on the secretary's new role as trainer and the implications for office educators. She found "Over one-quarter of the secretaries surveyed are training co-workers to use computer hardware, and almost half are training co-workers to use computer software" (p. 23).

Summary and Conclusion

1. Limited information was available for the review of related literature specifically on the nature of secretaries training others on computer technologies/applications.
2. Unlike the review of literature, some research studies have been conducted on the specific subject of the role of secretaries in training others.
3. Much of this new role of the secretary can be attributed to the elimination of middle management and the advancement of technology.
4. Training is a solution that is not being chosen as often as it should be. An overwhelming amount of literature shows that the entire workforce has a lack of training in all areas.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Description of Research Type

Descriptive research was the method used to conduct this study. Best and Kahn (1998) stated, "Descriptive research is concerned with the analysis of the relationships between nonmanipulated variables and the development of generalizations, extending its conclusion beyond the sample observed" (p. 139). This method basically collects information to answer, who, what, when, where and how. By asking these questions, descriptive research collects information about subjects regarding the nature of their activities or the current status of their activities in the studied areas. The survey method was chosen from many types of descriptive research methods as the most appropriate choice for this particular research project. More specifically, a self-reported questionnaire was used to conduct this research project. This type of survey collects factual data provided by the subject.

Subjects

The population for the study consisted of OSS II and III employed by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. OSS II and OSS II work under direction as the personal assistant to one or more principal(s). OSS III serve as the primary assistant to the principal(s) of a major academic or administrative unit. Both positions are required to have computer skills, more specifically, advanced skills in computer technologies/

applications. As a result of working in an office environment and having advanced computer skills, OSS II and III were deemed to be ideal subjects for this research project.

At the time of the study, SIUC employed a total of 159 full-time OSS II and III. A sample group was chosen from the total population. All of the subjects from the entire population were numbered 1-159. Then, the subjects with an odd number were chosen to be in the sample which totaled 80 subjects.

Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire was used to gather data to answer the research questions (Appendix A). Alexander (1996) developed a survey (Appendix B) to gather data for her research entitled: *The secretary's new role as trainer: Implications for office educators*. Permission was granted by Alexander to use portions of her instrument. Documentation of permission is a note on a fax cover sheet from Alexander (Appendix C). Alexander's questionnaire was modified by the researcher of this study. The questionnaire used for this research was three pages in length and contained two sections: (A) Demographics, and (B) Role in training others.

The first part of the instrument, Section A, was intended to determine the demographics of the respondents. Demographics included respondents' age, gender, and years of experience with the computer. OSS II and III respondents were also asked the years employed in a civil service position at SIUC. At the end of Section A, the subjects were asked if they have trained anyone in their office on computer technologies/

applications within the last six months. If the answer was no, the subjects were asked to place the survey in the enclosed return-addressed envelope and drop in campus mail. If the answer was yes, they were to continue to Section B.

Section B of the questionnaire was intended to determine to what extent OSS II and III respondents were training others to use computer hardware and software. A Likert questionnaire style was used for the first block of questions to determine the frequency of training others on specific types of computer technologies and applications. The choices ranged from very often to never. Other questions in this section inquired information on the methods of training and the approximate number of individuals the OSS staff member has trained in the past year. The final set of questions in Section B were also arranged in a Likert scale to determine the type of individuals the OSS staff member has continually trained. The choices on this scale also ranged from very often to never. Table 1 shows the relationship between research questions and instrument items.

Table 1

Research Questions and Related Questionnaire Items

Research Questions	Questionnaire Items
RQ 1	B1
RQ 2	A2, B2-B7
RQ 3	B8
RQ 4	B9
RQ 5	B10
RQ 6	B12
RQ 7	B14-B20

To determine the instrument's reliability, the questionnaire was piloted with three OSS II and III from SIUC. The pilot group was representative of the population and was not considered in the sample of the population. Included with the pilot questionnaire was a cover letter to explain the study. All three questionnaires were completed and returned properly to the researcher. Revisions suggested by the pilot group were made to the research instrument.

An SIUC faculty member reviewed the instrument to determine content validity for this study. Revisions were made to the questionnaire from faculty input.

The Human Subjects Committee for Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

reviewed the instrument and approved the project on February 4, 1998 (Appendix D).

Procedures

The Southern Illinois University at Carbondale Human Resources Department was asked to supply a complete set of the name, department, and mailcode for the currently employed OSS II and III civil service staff.

A cover letter (Appendix E) was constructed to accompany the survey instrument. The cover letter included a brief introduction to the survey, a direct plea to the respondents for assistance, a statement of confidentiality and compliance with the Carbondale Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects approval (Appendix D). A survey packet containing: a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a return-addressed envelope was mailed to subjects on February 13, 1998. A total of 53 subjects or 66.3%, responded by February 25, 1998. There was no follow-up of nonrespondents.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey were analyzed by computer using Microsoft Office 97. Returned surveys were checked for completion. Fifty-two surveys were fully completed. The data were entered into a spreadsheet. Frequencies and percentages were tabulated for each survey question.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The problem of the study was to determine the extent that Office Systems Specialists II and III at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) are involved in providing training to others on computer technologies/applications? Data collected from this study were obtained from questionnaires sent to 80 randomly selected OSS II and III employed by SIUC. The questionnaire consisted of questions related to demographics, years of employment as a civil service staff member at SIUC, years of computer experience, the frequency of computer technology/application training performed by OSS II and III, the methods of training, and the identification of the individuals that the subjects were training.

Respondents provided data to answer the following research questions regarding the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC:

1. On computer hardware configurations?
2. Relating to computer software applications: (a) word processing, (b) spreadsheets, (c) databases, (d) presentation, (e) graphics/desktop publishing, (f) specialized applications.
3. Relating to computer file management?
4. Relating to Internet/electronic mail functions?
5. Relating to university-wide system functions?

6. Relating to method of delivery?
7. Relating to different categories of individuals?

Findings are presented in two sections: (a) Respondent Data, and (b) Research Question Results.

Respondent Data

From the 80 questionnaires sent, 53 were returned, representing a 66.3% return rate. Of the 53 responses, 1 was unanswered. The remaining 52 responses were included in the sample data for a 65.0% response rate.

All 52 respondents were female. Forty-one questionnaires were returned from OSS II, and 11 from OSS III.

Table 2 presents respondents' years in a civil service position at SIUC. Sixteen (30.8%) OSS staff members have worked 6-10 years at SIUC. Thirteen (25.0%) OSS staff members have worked 11-15 years at SIUC.

Table 2

Respondents' Years in a Civil Service Position at SIUC

Years in Position	Frequency	Percent
3-5	10	19.2
6-10	16	30.8
11-15	13	25.0
16-25	10	19.2
26+	3	5.8
Total	52	100.0

Table 3 presents subjects' years of experience with computers. Twenty-eight (53.8%) respondents had 11 or more years of experience with computers. Nineteen (36.5%) OSS staff members had 7-10 years of experience with computers. There were also three respondents (5.8%) that had 4-6 year of experience on the computer.

Table 3

Respondents' Years of Experience with Computers

Years Experience	Frequency	Percent
Less than 4	2	3.8
4-6	3	5.8
7-10	19	36.5
11+	28	53.8
Total	52	99.9

Note: Total percentage does not equal 100 due to rounding error.

The last question in the first section of the questionnaire asked the subjects if they trained anyone on computer technologies/applications within the last six months. Sixteen (30.8%) of the subjects answered no to the question. If the respondent answered no, they were asked not to complete the second section of the instrument because it is only relevant if they have conducted some type of computer training in the last six months. Thirty-six (69.2%) of the subjects stated that yes they have trained someone in their office on computer technologies/applications within the last six months. Subjects answering yes were asked to continue to Section B of the questionnaire.

Research Question Results

Research Questions 1 and 2

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC on computer hardware configurations?

Analysis of data presented in Table 4 indicated that five (13.9%) of respondents provide weekly training on computer hardware configurations and 15 (41.7%) provide this type of training monthly.

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to computer software applications: (a) word processing, (b) spreadsheets, (c) databases, (d) presentation, (e) graphics/desktop publishing, (f) specialized applications.

Table 4 indicated that 4 (11.1%) respondents provide word processing software applications training daily, and 5 (13.9%) do so weekly. Sixteen (44.4%) of the subjects provide spreadsheet software applications training monthly and 9 (25.0%) weekly. Also, Table 4 shows that 18 (50.0%) of the OSS II and III at SIUC conduct training monthly on database software applications. Fourteen (38.9%) of the respondents provide training monthly on presentation software applications. The table also indicates that 2 (5.6%) of the subjects give weekly training on graphics/desktop publishing software applications and 13 (36.1%) give monthly training. Finally, Table 4 shows that 19 (52.8%) of the respondents provide training monthly on specialized software applications.

Table 4

Respondents' Role in Training Others on Computer Hardware/Software

Item	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Never		Total	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Computer hardware	0	0.0	5	13.9	15	41.7	16	44.4	36	100.0
Word processing	4	11.1	11	30.6	21	58.3	0	0.0	36	100.0
Spreadsheet	0	0.0	9	25.0	16	44.4	11	30.6	36	100.0
Database	0	0.0	2	5.6	18	50.0	16	44.4	36	100.0
Presentation	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	38.9	22	61.1	36	100.0
Graphics/desktop publishing	1	2.8	2	5.6	13	36.1	20	55.6	36	100.1
Specialized	1	2.8	4	11.1	19	52.8	12	33.3	36	100.0

Note: Total percentage does not equal 700 due to rounding error.

Research Questions 3-5

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to computer file management?

As Table 5 indicates, 5 (13.9%) of the respondents provide training on computer file management weekly, and 13 (36.1%) provide it monthly.

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to internet/electronic mail functions?

Three (8.3%) respondents reported that they provide training on internet/electronic mail functions daily, and 10 (27.8%) reported weekly training.

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to university-wide system functions?

Table 5 indicates 2 (5.6%) of the subjects provide daily training on university-wide system functions, and 18 (50.0%) provide this type of training monthly.

When asked for other types of computer technologies/applications, one (2.8%) respondent provides daily training on Delta Energy Management System, and one (2.8%) provides monthly training on mainframe use.

Table 5

Respondents' Role in Training Others on Computer Technologies

Item	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Never		Total	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Computer file management	1	2.8	5	13.9	13	36.1	17	47.2	36	100.0
Internet/e-mail	3	8.3	10	27.8	15	41.7	8	22.2	36	100.0
University-wide	2	5.6	0	0.0	18	50.0	16	44.4	36	100.0

Research Question 6

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to method of delivery?

Table 6 presents that 30 (83.3%) of the respondents provide informal (on a need to know basis) training on computer technologies/applications. Six (16.7) of the subjects provide both methods of training for others.

Table 6

Methods of Training Delivery

Training Method	Frequency	Percent
Informally	30	83.3
Formally	0	0.0
Both	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0

Research Question 7

What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to different categories of individuals?

Table 7 indicates that 18 (50.0%) of OSS II and III at SIUC provide training on computer technologies/applications to current office support staff. Nineteen (52.8%) of the respondents conduct training monthly conduct training weekly for current supervisors/bosses/professional staff. Table 7 shows that 3 (8.3%) of the subjects give computer technologies/applications training to faculty members weekly. Two (5.6%) subjects reported training new office support staff daily and 16 (44.4%) monthly. As Table 7 indicates, 13 (36.1%) respondents reported training student workers weekly.

Finally, 2 (5.6%) subjects identified training students weekly on computer technologies/applications. When asked for others, one (2.8%) respondent provides monthly training to craftsmen.

Table 7
Respondents' Role in Training Different Categories of Individuals

Item	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Never		Total	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Current staff	2	5.6	13	36.1	18	50.0	3	8.3	36	100.0
Current supervisors/ professionals	0	0.0	6	16.7	19	52.8	11	30.6	36	100.1
Faculty	0	0.0	3	8.3	13	36.1	20	55.6	36	100.0
New staff	2	5.6	13	36.1	16	44.4	5	13.9	36	100.0
New supervisors/ professionals	0	0.0	5	13.9	15	41.7	16	44.4	36	100.0
Student workers	1	2.8	13	36.1	17	47.2	5	13.9	36	100.0
Students	0	0.0	2	5.6	5	13.9	29	80.6	36	100.1

Note: Total percentage does not equal 100 due to rounding error.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of this study was to determine to the extent that Office Systems Specialists II and III at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) are involved in providing training to others on computer technologies/applications.

A review of literature indicated that the secretary's changing role can be largely attributed to the elimination of middle management and the advancement of technology. As companies downsize, the secretary's role becomes more demanding with greater responsibility and complexity. Most of today's secretaries are expected to be proficient in computer technologies/applications. Secretaries are also playing a large part in the training of others on computer technologies/applications because they are among the few people within today's workplace proficient in computer areas.

The survey instrument used was a modification of a survey created by Alexander (1996). The instrument was divided into two sections: (A) Demographics, and (B) Role in Training Others. A Likert questionnaire style was used in Section B to determine to what extent OSS II and III respondents were training others to use computer hardware and software. Other questions in this section inquired information on the methods of training and specific information about the individuals who receive training from the respondents.

The survey population consisted of 159 full-time Office Systems Specialists II

and III currently employed by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC). A random sample of 80 were mailed the survey along with a cover letter on February 13, 1998. Of 80 surveys, 53 responses were received and one was unusable resulting in 52 responses or a 65.0% rate.

Data were analyzed by computer using a spreadsheet software. Frequencies and percentages were tabulated for all responses. The data was then divided into two categories: respondents who have trained others on computer technologies/applications, and respondents who have not. Data that was receive from respondents who have trained others on computer technologies/applications was used to answer the research questions.

Findings

Findings for this study are discussed relative to the six research questions.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC on computer hardware configurations?

Five (13.9%) of the respondents indicated that they provide weekly training on computer hardware and 15 (41.7%) provide monthly training in this area.

2. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to computer software applications: (a) word processing, (b) spreadsheets, (c) databases, (d) presentation, (e) graphics/desktop publishing, (f) specialized applications.

Four (11.1%) of the respondents reported that the most frequent computer

technologies/applications training is conducted daily on word processing. There were 9 (25.0%) OSS II and III respondents who reported providing monthly training on spreadsheet computer software. Eighteen (50.0%) of the subjects conduct database training monthly. Presentation computer software is the subject of training monthly by 14 (38.9%) of the respondents. One (2.8%) respondent provides daily training for graphics/ desktop publishing software. Nineteen (52.8%) OSS II and III respondents reported that they conduct monthly training on specialized software.

3. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to computer file management?

One (2.8%) respondent provides daily training on computer file management and 5 (13.9%) provide training weekly.

4. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to internet/electronic mail functions?

There were 3 (8.3%) of the subject who reported conducting training daily on internet/electronic mail functions.

5. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to university-wide system functions?

Two (5.6%) of the OSS II and III respondents provide training to others daily on university-wide system functions and 18 (50.0%) who provide this training monthly.

6. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to method of delivery?

Thirty (83.3%) of the respondents reported that the method of delivering training

to others us informally or on a need to know basis. Zero (0.0%) reported formal training and 6 (16.7%) reported the use of both, informal and formal methods of training delivery.

7. What is the nature of training provided by OSS II and III at SIUC relating to different categories of individuals?

Two (5.6%) of the respondents reported training current staff and faculty members daily on computer technologies/applications. There were 13 (36.1%) of the OSS II and III respondents who reported training student workers weekly on computer areas. Nineteen (52.8%) of the subjects train current supervisors/professionals monthly on computer technologies/applications.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were derived from the results of this study:

1. Over half of the respondents have 11 or more years experience with computers.
2. Word processing software applications are most often the subject of daily training by OSS II and III at SIUC.
3. All respondents are providing word processing training to others.
4. Graphic/desktop publishing and specialized software applications are also provided daily by the respondents.
5. OSS II and III at SIUC provide monthly training to some degree on all of the computer technologies/applications involved in this research project.
6. Half of the respondents provide monthly training on university-wide

system functions.

7. Presentation software and graphics/desktop publishing software receive the least amount of training provided by the respondents.
8. Most of the training provided by OSS II and III respondents is done informally or on a need to know basis.
9. Current office support staff and new office support staff receive the most training on computer technologies/applications provided by OSS II and III respondents at SIUC.
10. All categories of individuals involved in the research receive a minimum of weekly training from the respondents on computer technologies/applications.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. More computer technology/application workshops should be offered on campus for all individuals.
2. University employees should be encouraged to attend formal workshops on computer technologies/applications to eliminate some of the training responsibilities of OSS II and III at SIUC.
3. Supervisors of OSS II and III at SIUC should be made more aware of the training activities of their employees and give them recognition for their extended duties.
4. OSS II and III at SIUC should attend workshops on how to train and supervise others to do the job their more effective and efficiently.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX B
ALEXANDER'S SURVEY INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX C
PERMISSION DOCUMENTATION

APPENDIX D
HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

APPENDIX E
SURVEY COVER LETTER

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