

Information and Communication Technology Literacy and Employability: Exploring Workforce Readiness and Employer Expectations in the Atlanta Region Healthcare Industry.

As our economy changes from one heavily reliant on manual labor and manufacturing to one dependent on knowledge and information, information and communication technology (ICT) literacy becomes a key component of economic growth. ICT literacy includes the ability to use electronic communication tools to locate and analyze relevant information, transmit appropriate data, and create solutions to social and economic problems (Gallardo, 2015). ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, such as radio, television, cellular phones, computers and network hardware and software. ICT is also associated with the various services and applications linked to these devices such as texting, video conferencing and distance learning (Gallardo, 2015).

As facets of ICT become deeply ingrained in the workplace, employees are expected to have a level of ICT literacy necessary to be effective at their jobs. Frequently, however, employers expect that employees will have the requisite skill level without documented skill requirements or formal skill assessment (Gibbs, 2014). In partnership with the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency (AWDA), this research project will be conducted with the aim of documenting employer expectations of employee ICT literacy within the Atlanta area healthcare industry and assess ICT literacy levels among individuals looking for employment in this sector. The city agency provides job seekers with resources to attain sustainable employment and collaborates with business leaders for the recruitment and development of their labor needs. The AWDA is currently developing partnerships in the Atlanta healthcare industry and is interested in characterizing employer needs and developing skills in potential employees. The project objective is to evaluate ICT readiness among jobseekers who want entry-level positions in healthcare and to document a mismatch or harmony of ICT skills needed to perform these jobs effectively.

This research fits in the broader literature of how the digital divide is evolving from an issue of access to computers and digital equipment to an issue of skills needed to find information and communicate using available technology. The introduction of computers and other technologies will not remove the skills gap. As new technological tools continue to develop, new gaps will arise (Ameil, 2006). An approach focusing on ICT literacy is a maintainable way to avoid current and future technological divides (ibid.).

References

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