

ENHANCING BASIC TECHNOLOGY SKILLS FOR MILITARY DEPENDENT  
SECONDARY STUDENTS  
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FINAL REPORT

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## Rationale for Project

To transition from high school to college or employment, high school students must become technologically competent, particularly in the use of computer applications. The National Educational Technology Standards for Students indicate 10 competencies that students should achieve prior to the completion of Grade 12. A portion of these competencies addresses the need for students to use the technology tools and resources for managing and communicating personal and professional information and to be able to understand basic computer operations and concepts. To address these competencies, a pilot project was conducted for military dependent high school students enrolled at the North Community High School (NCCHS) to enhance their basic technology skills. The pilot project used the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) program.

The ICDL was selected because it is the world's largest fundamental technology certification program providing individuals with basic computer skills training and validation/certification testing. Over five million people in over 140 countries hold ICDL certification.

NCCHS has an enrollment of 914 students, 365 (40%) of whom are living at the Naval Station Great Lakes (NSGL) in military housing. According to the 2004 Illinois School Report Card, 52.1% of the students at NCCHS are considered low income. The mobility rate for the school is 33.8%, most likely due to the transition of the military families as they are reassigned. This transition of students has the potential to cause educational gaps. The ICDL could help these students both in school as well as in the workplace as they start looking for jobs.

## Project Implementation

The target population for the pilot project was the North Chicago Community High School students living in military housing at Naval Station Great Lakes. Southern Illinois University Carbondale was operating a Computer Technology Center (CTC) with 10 computer stations at NSGL. These 10 computer stations are available for military families.

Three ICDL modules were made available to the high school youth living on NSGL. These modules addressed competencies in file management, word processing, and Internet and e-mail usage. Successful completers of these modules received a certificate which could be used in their portfolios to help them find jobs. The certificates are recognized by employers as an indication of the person's computer competencies. The skills acquired through the ICDL certification will also help students use the computer to their advantage in school as well as in future jobs.

Even though Career and Technical Education does not have its own Illinois Learning Standards, Career and Technical Education supports and builds all of the Illinois Learning Standards. One part of all Standards includes the following statement: Use appropriate instruments, electronic equipment, computers and networks to access

information, process ideas and communicate results. Therefore, the skills learned through the ICDL modules will help the youth meet all of the Illinois Learning Standards.

### Project Results

The budget allowed for the purchase of 56 modules. An application was prepared for interested high school youth. It was expected that a selection process would be used to select those youth who could participate in the pilot.

The ICDL representative did not do his job in making the modules available to the computer paraprofessional at the expected time. After contacting the ICDL home office, the modules and training to use the modules were finally available. The time to get the advertisements out and to recruit the youth was therefore cut short.

The project had the support of the Commander and the Navy Education Officer at NSGL. They allowed the project to be announced through the mail and through oral presentations at several events. Flyers were prepared and mailed to all families on the base. A news release about the training appeared in the NSGL newspaper.

The project had difficulties recruiting youth in the time that was available. After permission from Dr. Chris Merrill, the program was offered to young sailors at NSGL.

By the end of June, 21 people had started the ICDL program. Although the funding for this grant has been spent, the ICDL modules are still being used. An intern from SIUC is currently working with people who are interested in the training.

Although it seems more people would have been interested in free computer training, complete with certification, perhaps the timing did not fit into their schedule. The end of the school year is often hectic for youth. The original intent was to have offered the training much sooner.

Those youth and young sailors who took advantage of the free training and certification were happy and will surely benefit from the training.