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VA Center for Innovation

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Digital Tutor Prototype and Pilot

This newly launched innovation focuses on leveraging an emerging technology designed to position Veterans for rapid up-skilling in the high growth field of Information Technology (IT) for rapid increases in economic opportunity.
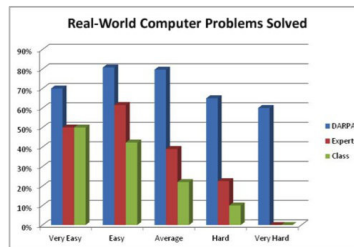
Overview

The Department of Veterans Affairs, through VACI, will leverage the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Education Dominance Digital Tutor technology prototype. Used by the Navy to train sailors as IT specialists, the Digital Tutor has demonstrated outstanding improvement in educational outcomes over other forms of instruction. This scalable and cost-effective system emulates the behavior of a one-to-one human tutor.

VACI believes the Digital Tutor methodology could provide a rapid and effective path for Veterans to enter America's growing and in-demand IT workforce. Working with Acuitus, the company that developed the Digital Tutor technology, VACI is supporting a pilot to demonstrate that this program can transition to the civilian sector to benefit unemployed and underemployed Veterans. Another key goal is to partner with employers to ensure a good match between the capabilities of the graduates and the needs of industry.

The one-year pilot program will modify the Digital Tutor for Veteran-specific usage, training 100 Veterans and measuring the method's impact on employment and salary range.

Prior Results

To address a serious shortage of trained IT personnel, the Navy engaged DARPA to develop a rapid training program. The 200 graduates from the new program competed against graduates of a 37-week traditional IT training course, as well as a cohort of experts with an average of 9 years experience in IT troubleshooting for the Navy. All three groups received 140 computer and network problems drawn at random from a collection of 20,000 real-world problems, and a week to solve them. Many of the more complex problems had taken days or weeks to solve in the real world. The DARPA graduates were able to solve the majority of those problems in under 30 minutes each, while the experts and traditional students solved less than 20 percent in that time.

For more information, go to www.acuitus.com/veterans.

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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs | 810 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington DC 20420
LAST UPDATED FEBRUARY 27, 2013.