

Providing Opportunities in Computing Education to some Highly Motivated Adults

Barry Brant
Glenfield Community College
Auckland, New Zealand
glenced@ihug.co.nz

Kathiravelu Ganeshan
UNITEC
Auckland, New Zealand
kganeshan@unitec.ac.nz

Abstract

This poster is based on the authors' experience in the management and teaching of introductory computing course to adults. It looks at a proposed study to see how we can strengthen links between Community Colleges and tertiary institutions and thus provide a pathway to some highly motivated adults who wish to continue gaining knowledge in computing.

The most elementary course run by Community Colleges involves the use of the keyboard, mouse, Microsoft Windows, Notepad, Wordpad and Paint. Most of the adults who enroll in this course have never used a computer before or have used computers for one or two specific tasks only, such as email, Internet, games and word processing.

Many who attend the elementary course have not been to any type of class or training in a long time. Some even admit to being 'scared' of computers while others feel they are just not smart enough to use them.

An assurance that each one of them will be able to drive a computer to achieve some useful tasks at the end of the three, two-hour sessions, not only helped them to overcome their fear and/or low confidence level, but also increased their level of motivation. Out of nearly seven hundred students who enrolled in these courses over the past six years there was only one student that could not be assured. It was noted that the average attendance of these courses was above 95%, which is indicative, in part, to the motivation and abilities of these students and the effectiveness of the course.

Other courses run at Community Colleges introduce students to the Internet (both IE and Netscape), email, Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, PhotoShop, Dreamweaver, Flash, Fireworks, M.Y.O.B., HTML, PageMaker, Publisher etc.

Some common factors easily recognized amongst the participants in these courses were: high levels of motivation, co-operation, attendance and achievement. Several of them have the potential to complete a formal qualification and contribute better to the economy and the community. In our study, we plan to explore ways of encouraging such students to further their skills in computing, and in particular provide a clear pathway to tertiary education by encouraging stronger links between Community Colleges and tertiary institutions and possibly some articulation between the programs.