

Information Transfer in Computer Language Learning

Rob Campbell
Whitireia Polytechnic
Porirua, NZ
r.campbell@whitireia.ac.nz

Many lecturers have observed students who failed to transfer basic programming skills from one language to another. A similar difficulty may exist when students (i.e. all of us) migrate between IDEs, operating systems or machines. The question I seek to address is: which factors aid these skill transfers, and which impede them? Is there an ideal 'starter' environment?

This poster shows some preliminary results of a two-stage research program. As a starting point, I felt it necessary to discover what learning environments exist, and what opinions instructors already held on this problem. Accordingly, institutions are or have been contacted in these countries:

Australia	5
Canada	6
Fiji	2
India	12
Ireland	4
New Zealand	3
South Africa	4
United Kingdom	8
United States	12
Zambia	2
Zimbabwe	2

The numbers are biased in favour of smaller countries, and conscientious non-respondents are being bypassed for willing participants. (If they do reply, their responses will be included. That's one advantage of a semi-qualitative survey.)

Although qualitative in nature, the survey suggests some trends which could be explored more rigorously in Stage 2, but at this instant (mid May,) responses are insufficient to tag numbers to these approaches.