
The Language of Computing and IT: Read with Understanding

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Abstract

Each profession has a specific collection of vocabulary which sets it apart from others. Those working in a particular profession, including educators in the field, are not necessarily aware of the language requirements specific to their field.

This poster highlights the specific language needs of Wintec's Diploma of Information and Communications Technology, Level 5, (DipICT L5) modules. This marks the beginning of a study directed towards assisting tutors in understanding the numeracy and literacy requirements of their courses, in terms related to the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults framework (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010).

Keywords

Literacy, Numeracy, TEC

Introduction

The Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007, is focused on the skills development necessary for participation in society. TEC have developed a comprehensive framework against which literacy and numeracy requirements may be measured. The "Read with Understanding" learning progression describes the steps that classify the complexity of word structures. The learning progressions are aimed towards assisting tutors in developing material that will embed literacy and numeracy into their programmes, particularly at levels 1-4. The TEC guidelines for strengthening literacy and numeracy through embedding (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009) offer four major guidelines at the course level. These are; Know the demands, Know the learner, Know what to do and Know how to do it. This poster illustrates the results of

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the first phase of a study that will concentrate on the “Know the demands” guideline. It focuses on the expectations placed on DipICT L5 students by the literacy and numeracy requirements associated with the programme curriculum.

Content

Selected NACCQ Blue Book prescriptions are used by Wintec’s School of Information Technology for the three streams associated with the DipICT L5 programme. These prescriptions have been analysed with word frequency counter software (Cobb & Bailey) to discover patterns and commonalities in the specific words used. The results of this analysis are charted in Figure 1.

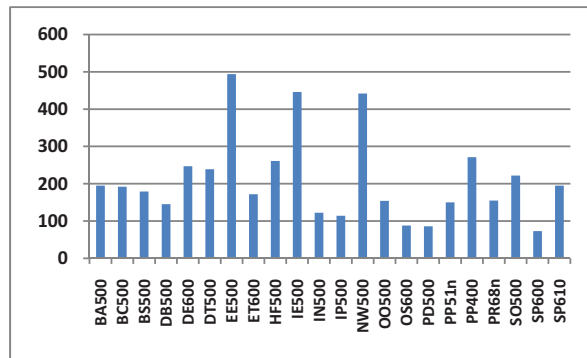


Figure 1 – DipICT L5 Programme Modules: Number of Different Words (Decoding Step 1 & 2 removed)

This initial analysis illustrates the specific language needs of the programme.

Further possibilities for study include the mapping of sample learning materials used by tutors in the DipICT L5 programme, against all the TEC Literacy and Numeracy for Adults learning progressions. The aim would be to develop, in tutors, a greater awareness of

the literacy and numeracy expectations of students enrolled in the programme.

Conclusion

Expectations of skills and background knowledge required by students entering the DipICT L5 programme are not always explicit (Hagen-Hall, 2007). Further studies will seek to identify the literacy and numeracy expectations inherent in the teaching and learning materials developed to meet the learning outcomes specified in the Blue Book prescriptions.

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