

Sri Lankans playing with Mac's: Insights into the 'mind tools' needed for computer learning

Phil Fitzsimmons

University of Wollongong, Australia.

E-mail: phil_fitzsimmons@uow.edu.au

This paper details the findings of a 'responsive evaluation' (Patton 1996) which focused on how one cohort of Sri Lankan post graduate students approached the use of computers for the first time. Beginning with them simply playing with the keyboard through to their use of 'Powerpoint' as a means of presentation, their experience gives a great deal of insight into the forms of reflective activity that is required to successfully approach computer use. More importantly their experience also provides a platform of ideals that answer Bransford (1990) and Russel and Russel's (1997) claim that little is understood in regard to how technology should be used to develop critical thinking and problem solving.

Key words: Information technology; Mind tools; Critical thinking; Problem solving