

# WEB-BASED TOOLS AND INSTRUCTION FOR DEVELOPING IT STUDENTS' WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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## **Abstract**

*Academic writing support delivered via the Internet needs to be rendered in very subject-specific terms for the resource to be of value.*

*This paper reports on a project involving writing support staff and a Computer Science subject leader to develop and evaluate a Web-based academic skills tutorial for first-year students. Language and learning staff worked closely with the subject leader and programmer to construct, evaluate and refine the resource over several years. The tutorial sought to provide online learning support for interpreting an IT assignment topic, extracting information from sources, and integrating the material into a report with the support of online lexical tools.*

*Several approaches to evaluation were used. The part of the evaluation focused on in this paper is the questionnaire administered to 170 students, seeking to determine whether they found the tutorial - including the lexical tools - helpful and if improvements were still required. Results of this are discussed, comparing the international and local student groups. Generally, students perceived most value in those sections of the resource which provided them with examples and models. Other changes noted by the subject leader which may also be associated with the availability of the resource are briefly discussed.*