

Developing first year Finance students' numeracy skills: collaboration between lecturer and learning advisor.

Kevin Vanderplank and Sam Fearn

Abstract:

The increasing diversity of backgrounds, experience levels and abilities within first year student cohorts has been well documented, particularly with regard to academic literacy support requirements. The concomitant issue of numeracy support however, has been somewhat overlooked. Taylor and Galligan (2006, p.23) note that in order to be successful at university, students must be "academically numerate" or able to manipulate and interpret quantitative components of the curriculum. In recent years, the mathematical confidence of students studying Business has also been seen to drop (Stenberg, Varua & Yong, 2010). In order to alleviate potential 'maths anxiety' and to underline the importance of numeracy skills to first year students, an embedded workshop was designed for students studying an introductory Finance unit. The session was a collaboration between lecturer and learning advisor and aimed to both introduce students to additional support opportunities and emphasise the value of numeracy skill development as an integral part of the course. The numeracy materials were contextualised to the unit content to provide a relevant and student-focussed learning environment.

Keywords: numeracy support, first year students, diversity

References:

- Stenberg, L.; Varua, M.E., & Yong, J. (2010). Mathematical aptitude, attitude, secondary schools and student success in quantitative methods for Business subjects in an Australian catholic university experience. *Paper presented to the 39th Australian Conference of Economists*. Sydney, NSW, 27-29 September.
- Taylor, J., & Galligan, L. (2006). Mathematics for maths anxious tertiary students: Integrating the cognitive and affective domains using interactive multimedia. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies* 15(1), 23-42.