

Swift Jyoti for Women - Preface for Faculty



Did you know that the world's first programmer was a woman? Her name was Ada Byron, the Countess of Lovelace, and she was one of the world's greatest mathematicians. She also happened to be the daughter of one of the most famous poets of all time, Lord Byron.

This course is for those women who want to and need to learn to use computers. It is not a course on computer science. It is a course on how to do things on a computer, so that it helps a woman to cope better with the complexities and pleasures of 21st century life.

A course for women has to, necessarily, emphasize life, practicality and the "human" side of computing.

As faculty, you will need to keep this in mind at all times while administering this course.

Computers are simple and useful machines. They are used by millions of people to communicate with each other, play games, watch movies, listen to music and, in general, to have fun. Understanding the internals of computing is not as important as learning how to use them.

Computers are simple to use. Even little children learn to use them in minutes. In fact, children are among the most sophisticated users of computers. In 1999, scientists at NIIT discovered that children could learn to use a computer without any help at all. Even children with little or no education could learn to use computers. By themselves. It was a discovery that caught the imagination of the world and it was reported in every major newspaper and TV channel in the world.

The following points should be kept in mind while conducting the course:






1. Let the learners be as independent as possible. Don't direct them or command them. Help when required.
2. Let the learners decide how they want to learn. Encourage them to work together on problems. Congratulate them when they achieve something on their own or in a group.
3. Learners become ready to learn when they experience the need to know or be able to do something in order to be more effective.
4. Women learners are particularly likely to study things that are relevant to their lives, they like relevant tasks or relevant problems. They don't study something just because it's a "subject".
5. Women learners are particularly motivated if what they are doing makes them feel good about themselves. Simple punishments or rewards don't work too well with them.

This course deals with the "how to" of common computing tasks. Each "how to" is followed by a "things to do" section that immediately puts the skill you have learned to good use. These activities could be done alone, or, preferably, in collaboration with other learners. The best way to learn to use a computer is by working together on problems and helping each other learn. The

course coordinator should help to organize the learning experience and guide through any difficulty learners may have. Remember, “teaching” is not as important as “learning”.

Women and their priorities can be very diverse. What an 18-year-old wants from a computer may be completely different from what a 45-year-old might want. We have tried to make the “things to do” as interesting as we can. They would learn more quickly if what they were doing made sense to their lives.

There are many more things to do in this course than there is time for in the 10 hours of the course. We suggest that you help the learners complete at least 20 tasks that interest them. To help you do this; we have a table below that shows you what is likely to be of interest to women of different ages. It is not necessary that you have to follow this table, but it might help to look at it and use it to decide what is important.

Age range (years)	Communications (e-mail, chat, sms)	The Internet (browsing, searching, downloading)	Text (word processing)	Graphics (Drawing, photographs, designs)	Numbers (spreadsheets, business graphics)
 13- 18	20	50	5	25	0
 18-25	50	25	10	10	5
 25-35	40	15	15	20	10
 35-45	50	25	10	10	5
 >45	50	25	15	10	0

The numbers in this table indicate the amounts of time (**in percentage**) you should be spending on different parts of the course. These are our suggestions only and you are absolutely free to decide your own utilization of time.



Sugata Mitra
Centre for Research in Cognitive Systems, NIIT Limited

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