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Generating a Gender Balance: making introductory information systems courses a positive experience

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Abstract

There is a growing shortfall of graduates entering the IT profession. The situation is exacerbated by the continuing decline in the number of women undertaking IT related degrees. However, there are an increasing number of students taking business degrees that have a small information systems component, although few students choose to major in IS. Using a qualitative reflective approach we identify the perceptions and experiences of female undergraduates taking introductory IS courses in two universities, one in Australia and one in New Zealand. We discuss ways of improving the delivery of introductory IS courses in order to make information systems more interesting to women undergraduates, thus enhancing their learning experiences and encouraging further uptake of IS majors. The paper concludes with some reflections on other influences that impact on the ability of IS departments to deliver appropriate introductory courses.

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