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Technology and mathematics learning at university level: a South African perspective.

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Summary: We report on attitudes to the use of technology for learning mathematics among a group of early undergraduate South African university students. Fifty-seven students were introduced to the use of *Mathematica* for graphing and symbolic manipulation in a pilot project in a first-year mathematics course at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2004. Their attitudes (as measured using established instruments at different stages early in the academic year) are generally very positive. Comparison with similar studies conducted in Australian and British universities (using the same or similar instruments) yield comparable results. Considering that computers and graphic calculators are not used at all for learning mathematics in most South African schools, that 39% of the students in our sample do not have computer access at home, and that 19% do not consider themselves computer-literate, this finding is encouraging. Some of the most positive attitudes towards the use of *Mathematica* stem from those who have had the least access to the use of computers. These generally positive views suggest that these students, in particular, welcome the opportunity to learn to use technology, rather than fear it, and feel empowered by their experience.

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