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Subject: Re: A Programmer's Education

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Tue, 05 Dec 2006 17:56:33 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

>> Braedley writes:

>

>>> Why don't I ever see these simple solutions?

>

>> You are probably University-educated. Not your fault. :-)

>

> While we are on this topic (and while I wait for SOLARSOFT

> to finish downloading), what is the most useful class you

> ever took in school?

Easy. Programming in Fortran 251. Not so much for the Fortran stuff (it was taught to us physics majors, with drippingly evident disdain, by a CS professor) but because said prof failed me on the first assignment because I was the only one in the class that had ordered the (correct) results opposite from everyone else. When I confronted him about it mentioning that he never specified an order in the assignment, he grudgingly (at least, how I remember it) agreed and gave me an appropriate mark. That's when I learned that smart people are sometimes just as dumb as the rest of us. No more pedestals for me! :o)

> For me, two come immediately to mind. The typing class

> I took as a sophomore in high school because I was a shy

> boy and the girl/boy ratio was 15:1. I use that knowledge

> every single day of my life. (In, uh, more ways than one.)

>

> And the freshman English Composition class I took in my

> first semester of college from a hippie instructor who

> gently taught a good evangelical Christian boy to question

> everything.

Hmmm...maybe there's a theme here. The important lessons that one remembers are those that provide more questions than answers. (Although, nothing earth-shattering there I guess).

paulv

--

Paul van Delst            Ride lots.

CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP/EMC

Eddy Merckx

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Fax:(301)763-8545

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Subject: Re: A Programmer's Education

Posted by [Pete Warner](#) on Tue, 05 Dec 2006 20:17:53 GMT

In my first major electrical circuits lab test our assignment was to figure out what sort of simple circuit was in a black box. I kept measuring current values far more than should have been possible and I my answer was off by a couple orders of magnitude from what I expected. With 5 minutes left I discovered the oscilloscope did not have the correct probes attached and I had wasted most of the hour trying to figure out how my calculations were wrong.

I learned to trust my instincts and that technology is not infallible.

On Dec 5, 12:56 pm, Paul van Delst <Paul.vanDe...@noaa.gov> wrote:

> David Fanning wrote:

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> provide more questions than answers. (Although, nothing earth-shattering there I guess).

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> paulv

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> Paul van Delst                Ride lots.

> CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP/EMC                Eddy Merckx

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> Fax:(301)763-8545

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Subject: Re: A Programmer's Education  
Posted by [Braedley](#) on Tue, 05 Dec 2006 20:34:24 GMT  
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David Fanning wrote:

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> I took as a sophomore in high school because I was a shy  
> boy and the girl/boy ratio was 15:1. I use that knowledge  
> every single day of my life. (In, uh, more ways than one.)

>

> And the freshman English Composition class I took in my  
> first semester of college from a hippie instructor who  
> gently taught a good evangelical Christian boy to question  
> everything.

>

> Two great classes that changed my life! :-)

>

> Cheers,

>

> David

>

> P.S. And for Braedley, it is possible to overcome a  
> University education, but it takes more time than you  
> might expect. :-)

>

> --

> David Fanning, Ph.D.

> Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

> Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

> Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Well I can tell you my most useless class: Intro to Java 1. Not only had I done everything in that course a year earlier in high school, but the structure of the course bothered me a lot. Instead of going "This is an int. It holds integer values. This is a double. It holds real

values. This is a string. It's an array characters. This is a function. It manipulates data." we went "This is an object. We will tell you all about those ints, doubles, and strings down the road after you're thoroughly confused." Because of that, I'm pretty sure that every single program I wrote was much more procedural than the markers would like (they wanted an object for `_everything_`).

I can't really say what my most useful course would be. Maybe signals, since I'm using that in my work now.

Braedley

PS: I doubt I'll overcome my university education any time soon, I still have a year and a half left of electrical engineering classes after I finish this work term.

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Subject: Re: A Programmer's Education  
Posted by [btt](#) on Tue, 05 Dec 2006 20:57:40 GMT  
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David Fanning wrote:

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> ever took in school?

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Hi,

I once took a great programming course that has since led to years of fruitful employment. The course outline was very well planned and the instructor not only knew the stuff but relished sharing it with others.

The instructor also read poetry and told mythic stories in class.

Cheers,  
Ben

---

Subject: Re: A Programmer's Education  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 05 Dec 2006 21:00:06 GMT

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Braedley writes:

- > PS: I doubt I'll overcome my university education any time soon, I
- > still have a year and a half left of electrical engineering classes
- > after I finish this work term.

Well, there you go. But it's never too early to begin thinking like an old man and looking for the easiest and most comfortable solution first. You would be surprised how often this turns out to be the BEST solution. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

---

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Subject: Re: A Programmer's Education

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 05 Dec 2006 21:12:52 GMT

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Ben Tupper writes:

- > I once took a great programming course that has since led to years of
- > fruitful employment. The course outline was very well planned and the
- > instructor not only knew the stuff but relished sharing it with others.
- >
- > The instructor also read poetry and told mythic stories in class.

Yeah, I hear he was a hell of a tennis player, too. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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