Computer Science:

Designing Programs for High Schools

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Pedagogy	Focus on Design	Software: DrScheme
Design Recipe	Design data hierarchies first	Language levels
steps in the design process:	Design methods: data driven	Scheme-like & ProfessorJ
pedagogical intervention	test first	Interactive environment
self-regulatory learning	Immutable data first	Targeted error-messages
enforces documentation enforces test first approach	using structural recursion	Test design is supported
	Design of abstractions	



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>> Introduction

- Introductory Informatics in the USA and the World
- Principles vs. Artifacts
- TeachScheme! and HtDC
- Design Recipe
- Programming Environment Support
- Scaling Up
- Conclusion



Introductory Informatics in the World

- Variety of curricula
- Some countries more successful than others
- Main concerns make it relevant, yet not fashion driven
- Bring Informatics to the level of Physics and Biology
- USA is not the leader ...



Introductory Informatics in the USA

- Local control of schools and curricula
- No nationwide certification of teachers
- CSTA two years old
- The only common force: AP Curriculum
 - Keep up with the latest language and its features
 - Make sure it is compatible with 100 (bad) textbooks
 - Universal Introductory College Curriculum
 - No room for alternatives, innovation
 - Colleges and Universities -- same problems

Principles vs. Artifacts

Designing a car:

- start with just the engine
- -- no gears
- -- no controls
- -- no steering
- -- no brakes
- -- no transmission

First understand the engine design well



Principles vs. Artifacts

Learning to fly an airplane:

- start with just the simple flight control
- -- no take-offs
- -- no landings
- -- no high winds
- -- no fancy maneuvers
- -- one engine, or no engine

First understand the flight control well

Principles vs. Artifacts

Learning to design a computer program:

- Start with the full scale commercial language
 - Syntax, complex constructs
 - Algorithms and Complex data
 - IDE e.g. Eclipse
 - I/O, GUIs, Events/Actions, Graphics
 - running, debugging, seeing the output, providing input

Student is confused from the beginning



A Bit of History

Assembly Language Programming 15 years ago:

- Books focused on Vax, Motorola, Intel
- Details of a particular architecture -- No common principles

1994: Patterson & Hennessy: Computer Organization and Design

- End of language wars -- focus on the concepts
- Still relevant today -- even with the advances of architecture

Principles, not Artifacts

Written by top researchers



What are the Principles of Computation?

Theory:

- Turing machines, Automata theory
 - state transitions change the state of the world
- Church, Lambda calculus
 - functional approach: function consumes data, produces data
 - compositional: always known output for the given inputs
 - easier to understand, to test
 - programs follow the structure of data
 - Solid underlying theory -- preferred even for OO programming

What Should we Teach?

Understand Computation

- represent information as data
- interpret data as information
- design operations that transform data
 - either imperative or functional

Design Programs

• convert reasoning about information, data, and data manipulation into a working program

-- regardless of the language



TeachScheme! and HtDC

- Overview
- Principles
- Resources
- Philosophy
- Structure
- Design Recipe
- Programming Environment Support
- Scaling Up
- Conclusion

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Overview



TeachScheme!

- Introductory curriculum with over 10 years of experience
- Used in over 300 high schools in the USA
- First semester in universities
- Summer camp for high school students
- Book: How to Design Programs -- used in Mexico, Germany, Poland, China...
 - o free with online support at http://www.teach-scheme.org/

How to Design Classes (HtDC)

- builds on the TeachScheme! foundation --> OO design
- Java-like language -- over 4 years in the classrooms

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Overview



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The team:

Matthias Felleisen, Robert Bruce Findler, Matthew Flatt Kathryn E. Gray, Shriram Krishnamurthi, Viera K. Proulx

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Principles

- Simple and Fun
 - Students program the actions, not I/O
- Design Discipline
 - Student learn to design systematically
- Solid Pedagogy
- Supporting Environment
 - Language levels based on pedagogy
 - Tools: Interactions, Stepper, Test support
 - Libraries at the correct abstraction level
- Principles That Scale Up to the Real World



TeachScheme! and HtDC: Resources



Teacher Support for TeachScheme!

- Book: How to Design Programs free at http://www.teach-scheme.org/
- Summer workshops for teachers
- New exercises online with solutions (password protected)
- New libraries added
- Mailing list help, discussions, online community
- Testimonials

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Resources



HtDC: Curriculum for program design using OO language

- Book: How to Design Classes under development
 - Preliminary version used in several schools
 - Expected completion this summer
- Lecture notes, labs, exercises online
- ProfessorJ series of language levels
- Libraries for simple graphics, animation, events
- Curriculum tested in classrooms for four years
- Summer workshops for teachers
- Mailing list help, discussions, online community

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Philosophy

Game of Pong

- Ball falling down timer controlled
- Paddle moving left/right key controlled
- Display the ball and paddle
- Detect out-of-bounds or collision

We need to represent the ball and the paddle

- But also:
 - Frame, canvas, timer
 - key listener, graphics, speed choice

Remember the car and airplane - focus on the key idea!

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Philosophy



- Focus on the Principles
- How the ball moves
- How the paddle moves
- When do they collide
- How does the game start
- How does the game resume after ball is out of play

The rest is irrelevant to the program design for a novice

- Design the game logistics systematically
- Provide simple interface for user interactions
- Program the Model, not the View

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Philosophy



Focus on the Principles

- How do you represent information as data?
- How do you interpret data as information?
- What is the operation (function, method, action) you want to model?
- What information/data do you need to perform the action?
- What do you expect as the outcome of this operation?
- What are the sub-parts of the information/data the operation uses?

Compose all of the above into a program

- At the introductory level like the game of Pong
 - Can be done with 13 year old children ...
 - In one week ...

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Structure

The Design Recipe: The Pedagogy

- Structured description of the design process
 - Program design is divided into steps
 - Questions to ask at each step
 - Clearly defined outcome for each step
 - Enforces test-driven design, documentation
- Pedagogy
 - Self-regulatory learning: independent learner
 - Pedagogical intervention



TeachScheme! and HtDC: Structure



The Language Levels

- Full programming language is too complex
 - Start only with the necessary language constructs
 - Motivate each additional construct with need
 - At each level provide user-appropriate feedback
 - Enforce constraints that are appropriate for the novice
- TeachScheme!
 - Scheme-like series of languages own syntax
- How to Design Classes: ProfessorJ
 - Java-like series of languages

TeachScheme! and HtDC: Structure



The Programming Environment: DrScheme

- Language levels: Scheme-like and ProfessorJ
 - error messages designed for each language level
 - Scheme syntax adjusted for novices:
 - first car rest cdr define let
- Interactions window
- Stepper for Scheme languages
- Test support for ProfessorJ



TeachScheme! and HtDC

>> Design Recipe

- The Basics
- Design Recipe for Data
- Design Recipe for Functions/Methods

Programming Environment Support

Scaling Up

Conclusion

Design Recipe: the steps in the design process

- Clear set of questions to answer for each step
- Outcomes that can be checked for correctness and completeness

Pedagogical foundation:

- Self-regulatory learning:
 - Steps in the design process with clear goals, instructions on how to reach the goals, and a way to assess success.
- Support for pedagogical intervention:
 - Instructor asks at which step the student is stuck then follows with the questions for that step.



Problem: Program design involves two complex tasks

the design of data and data hierarchies
 the design of functions/methods to manipulate the data

Our solution: **Designing data** before designing functions

Design Recipe for data hierarchies

- analyze the problem
- represent the information as data
- design the classes of data
- define examples of instances of classes of data
- interpret the data as information



Design recipe for designing classes:

The problem statement

 we would like to paint geometric shapes -- circles, squares, and combo-shape; see if they overlap and see if a point is inside a shape ...



Design recipe for designing classes:

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Data Definition- in (key)words

- A Shape is one of:
 - circle: given by a center point and the radius
 - square: given by the NW point and the size
 - combo: given by the top shape and the bottom shape



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 - Circle: given by a center Point and the radius
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 - Combo: given by the top Shape and the bottom Shape

Design Recipe: class, containment, union, self-reference

- ;; to represent a geometric shape
- ;; A Shape is one of
- ;; -- (make-circle Posn Number)
- ;; -- (make-square Posn Number)
- ;; -- (make-combo Shape Shape)

(define-struct circle (center radius)) (define-struct square (nw size)) (define-struct combo (top bot))

Example:

(define center (make-posn 100 100)) (define c (make-circle center 50))



Corresponds exactly to the narrative data definition

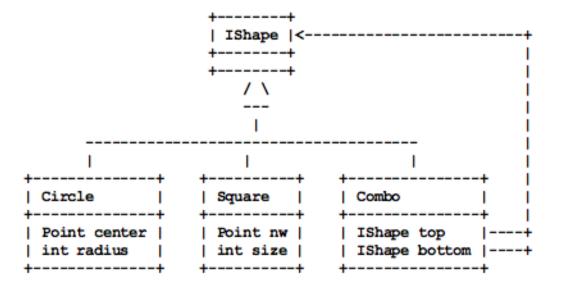
Students use the diagrams to represent the data definition

In Scheme Posn, in Java Point

32

Design Recipe: Designing Data

Class diagram for the IShape class hierarchy:







```
// to represent geometric shapes
interface IShape {
}
```

```
// to represent a circle
class Circle implements IShape {
    Point center;
    int radius;
```

```
Circle(Point center, int radius){
  this.center = center;
  this.radius = radius;
}
```

Code can be generated automatically

Examples of **Shape** data

(define center (make-posn 100 100)) (define nw (make-posn 120 100)) (define c (make-circle center 50)) (define s (make-square nw 150)))) (define cs (make-combo c s))))

Translation of data into information:

s is a square with the nw corner at coordinates (120, 100),
 width 150 and height 50



Examples of IShape objects



// Examples of geometric shapes - in the Client class

Point center = new Point(100, 100); Point nw = new Point(120, 100);

IShape c = new Circle(this.center, 50);
IShape s = new Square(this.nw, 150, 50);

IShape sc = new Combo(this.s, this.c);

Translation of data into information:

s is a square with the nw corner at coordinates (120, 100),
 width 150 and height 50

Design Recipe: Designing Functions/Methods

Design Recipe: describes the steps in the design process

- Helps the student to work systematically
- Enforces good design discipline
- Build up complexity in parallel with the complexity of data
- Encourages to focus at one task per functions

Steps in the Design Recipe:

- Problem Analysis and Data Definition -- understand
- Purpose & Header -- interface and documentation
- Examples -- show the use in context: design tests
- Template -- make the inventory of all available data
- Body -- only design the code after tests/examples
- The terms of the event the event of the terms in the terms





The problem statement:



- We need to find out whether a point is contained in a shape.
- Design recipe for functions/methods: function/method contains
- **Step 1: Problem analysis and data definition**
- The problem deals with two pieces of data -- the point and the shape.
 - Point is a known class of data (Posn in Scheme, Point in Java) with the fields x and y
 - Shape is represented by the class of data defined earlier.
- The function/method produces a boolean value true or false

Step 2: Purpose statement and the header



In Scheme: the function consumes a **Posn** (predefined) and a **Shape** and produces a **Boolean**

;; does the given shape contain the given point? ;; Shape Posn -> Boolean (define contains (s p) ...)

In Java: the method is defined in the interface IShape (and all of the classes that implement it). It is then invoked by an instance of a class that implements the IShape interface. It consumes a Point and produces a boolean value.

// does this shape contain the given point?
boolean contains(Point p);

Step 3: Examples



Show examples of the use of this function/method with expected outcomes.

- In Scheme --- using the earlier examples of data:
 - (contains(make-posn 90, 110) c) ---> true (contains(make-posn 90, 110) s) ---> false (contains(make-posn 90, 110) sc) ---> true
- In Java --- using the earlier examples of data:
 - this.c.contains(new Point(90, 110)) ---> true this.s.contains(new Point(90, 110)) ---> false this.sc.contains(new Point(130, 110)) ---> true

Notice the use of this to refer to the instances that invoke the method

Step 4: Template -- an inventory of available data

- ;; Shape Posn -> Boolean (define contains (s p) ... (circle? s) (circle-center s) (circle-radius s) ...
 - ... (square? s) ...
 - ... (combo? s) ...
 - ... (combo-top s) ...
 - ... (combo-bottom s) ...
 - ... (contains (combo-top s) p) ... ;; Booelan
 - ... (contains (combo-bottom s) p)... ;; Boolean
 - ... (posn-x p) (posn-y p) ...

- ;; Boolean
- ;; Posn
- ;; Number
- ;; Boolean
 - ;; Boolean
 - ;; Shape
- ;; Shape
- ;; Number :: Number





Step 5: Function Body

```
;; Shape Posn -> Boolean
(define contains (s p)
(cond
[(circle? s)
(<= (distance (circle-center s) p) (circle-radius s))]
```

```
[(square? s)
...]
```

[(combo? s) (or (contains (combo-top s) p) (contains (combo-bottom s) p)]))

Step 6: Tests

turn the examples into tests and evaluate them

Step 4: Template -- an inventory of available data

\circ // in the class Circle

- ... this.center ...
- ... this.center.distTo(p)... -- int
- ... this.radius ...
- ...р...
- ... p.distTo(Point ...) ... -- int

- -- Point
- -- int
- -- Point
- // in the class Combo
 - ... this.top ...
 - ... this.bottom ...

-- IShape -- IShape

- ... // does the top shape contain the given point?
- ... this.top.contains(p) ... -- boolean

... // does the bottom shape contain the given point?

- ... this.bottom.contains(p) ... -- boolean
 - Doint





Design recipe for methods: method contains -- Part 3

Step 5: Function Body

```
    // in the class Circle
    boolean contains(Point p) {
        return this.center.distTo(p) <= this.radius;
    }
}</pre>
```

Step 6: Tests

 turn the examples into tests in the Client class and evaluate them





Design Recipe: the steps in the design process:

- Problem Analysis and Data Definition -- understand
- Purpose & Header -- interface and documentation
- Examples -- show the use in context: design tests
- Template -- make the inventory of all available data
- Body -- only design the code after tests/examples
- Test -- convert the examples from before into tests

Clear set of questions to answer for each step

Outcomes that can be checked for correctness and completeness

Opportunity for *pedagogical intervention*





Design Recipe: the steps in the design process:

- Problem Analysis and Data Definition -- understand
- Purpose & Header -- interface and documentation
- Examples -- show the use in context: design tests
- Template -- make the inventory of all available data
- Body -- only design the code after tests/examples
- Test -- convert the examples from before into tests
 Design foundation:
- Required documentation from the beginning
- Test-driven design from the beginning
- Focus on the structure of data and the structure of programs





Example of a more complex problem students can solve:

- River with tributaries: pollution, lengths
- Binary trees: search trees, ancestor trees
- Drawing fractal curves: Sierpinski triangles, savannah trees

using our Canvas and graphics library

- Interactive games with timer and key events: Worm, UFO, Pong
 - using our World library
- Classes that represent Java programs: are the definitions valid
- Sorting lists, constructing sublists: easy tasks in our context





Introduction

- TeachScheme! and HtDC
- Design Recipe

Programming Environment Support

- The Goals
- DrScheme
- Language Levels: HtDP
- Language Levels: HtDC
- Libraries: Graphics, Events, Timer, GUI, Web
- Test Support

Scaling Up

Conclusion



The Goals:

- Reduce the syntax to what is necessary
- Allow the student to focus on the key concepts
- Feedback / error messages at user's level of understanding
- Prevent misuse of advanced features
- Support a well documented test design
- Provide tools to understand program evaluation

Add new features when the need becomes compelling

DrScheme



- Full scale, yet very simple environment
- Definitions window
- Interactions window
 - Exploratory interactions: examples of data, function application
 - Test outcomes
- Language choices
 - R5S5, EOPL, Swindle, MzScheme, MrEd, FrTime, ...
 - Beginner Scheme Languages
 - ProfessorJ Languages
- Wizards, tools, libraries to help in program design

How to Design Program Languages

Beginning Student

- a pedagogical version of Scheme that is tailored for beginning computer science students.
 - syntax forms that make the meaning clear
 - syntax forms that support clear program design
- **Beginning Student with List Abbreviations**
- extends Beginning Student with convenient (but potentially confusing) ways to write lists, including quasiquote.

How to Design Program Languages

Intermediate Student

• adds local bindings and higher-order functions.

Intermediate Student with Lambda

• adds anonymous functions.

Advanced Student

• adds mutable state.



ProfessorJ

- Definitions window
 - All class definitions in one file at the start
 - Libraries/packages provided and used
- Test support
 - Compare two objects for their contents, not identity
 - Summarize the test results and diagnostics
- Interactions window
 - Exploratory interactions: examples of objects, method invocations



ProfessorJ



- Wizards to eliminate mechanical typing tasks
- Language levels
 - Gradual increase in the complexity of the syntax and the language features
 - Students see the need for new features before they are introduced
- Library to support simple graphics and event programming
 - Copies the design of library for HtDP
 - Also available for commercial Java for easy transition

ProfessorJ Language Levels

• Beginner Language: Classes & Methods

 no mutation, static, access modifiers, loops, arrays, overloading, inner classes, reflection

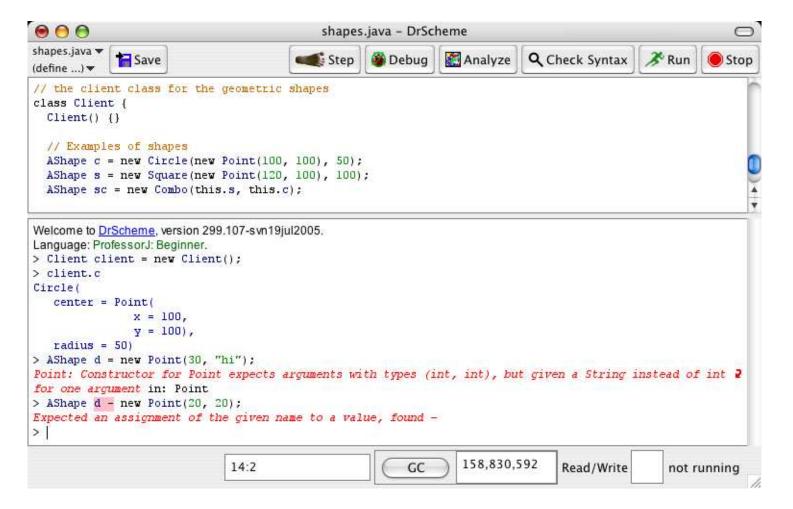
- Intermediate Language: Polymorphism & Abstraction
 - adds inheritance and overriding methods, casts, imperative programs
- Advanced Language: Iterative programming & APIs
 - adds loops & arrays, access controls and packages, overloading, static
- Full Language
 - No plans to implement students move on to 'real world'



The Languages and the Environment



ProfessorJ in DrScheme





Introduction

- TeachScheme! and HtDC
- Design Recipe
- Programming Environment Support

Scaling Up

- Desinging Abstractions Systematically
- Understanding Mutation
- Understanding Program and Language Design

Conclusion

Abstractions --- integrated throughout the course

- motivated by observing repeated code patterns
- students are taught to design abstractions



Abstractions --- integrated throughout the course

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- students are taught to design abstractions

Designing abstractions: Design Recipe for Abstractions

- Identify the differences between similar solutions
- Replace the differences with parameters and rewrite the solution
- Rewrite the original examples and test them again



Motivating abstractions

Abstracting over similarities:

- Classes with similar data → abstract classes/interfaces
- Lists of different data → list of <T> → generics
- Classes with similar structure and methods

 Abstract Data Types
- Comparisons

 interfaces that represent a function object
- Traversal of a container → iterator



Examples of abstractions



- Abstract classes: common fields, common concrete methods
- Generics: common structure of data
 - e.g. *list of <T>*
- Comparable, Comparator: common functional behavior
- Abstract Data Type common functional representation of structures
 - o add, remove, size, contains
- Iterators: abstracting over traversals

Understanding Mutation



Students are introduced to stateful programming when they already can design quite complex programs.

- When is mutation needed
- What are the dangers of using mutation
- Designing tests in the presence of mutation
- The need for mutation:
 - Circularly referential data
 - ArrayList the need for mutating a structure
 - GUIs the need to record the current state apart from the current view
 - Efficiency mutating sort and other algorithms

Understanding the Big Picture

The foundations are there for understanding full Java

- Study of the Java Collections Framework
- Understanding the meaning of Javadocs
- Foundations for reasoning about complexity
- Foundations for understanding the data structure tradeoffs
 - HashMap, Set, TreeMap, Linked structures
- Motivation for and using the JUnit

Students can understand other languages, their design and structure



Understanding User Interactions



Students programmed the **model** most of the time

They see a clear separation of programming the user interactions from programming the behavior of the model

Tools to suport user interactions: Java Power Tools

- Clear abstractions for GUI elements design and layout
- Uniform way of reading input data from a variety of sources
- Support for data encoding for reading/writing
- Clear abstractions for event handling
- User interactions playground: Java Power Framework

Java Power Tools available at http://www.ccs.neu.edu/jpt/



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>> Conclusion

- Our Experiences
- Plans

Our Experiences: TeachScheme!



- Over 300 high schools student do well in following programming courses
- Girls are attracted and remain in the courses
- Math skills are improved
- Challenges and the room to progress for the best students
- Weaker students do well learn skills and succeed
- Teachers are very happy
- Web site:
- http://www.teach-scheme.org

Our Experiences: HtDC



Instructors in follow-up courses feel students are much better prepared

Very low attrition rate (<5%)

Students are much more confident in their understanding of program design

Two very successful summer workshops for secondary school and university teachers

Workshop planned for summer 2006

A growing number of followers despite the 'work in progress'

Web site:

http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/vkp/HtDCH.html

Our Experiences: HtDC

A growing number of followers:

- Northeastern University, University of Utah
- University of Chicago, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Worcester State College, Colby College
- University of Waterloo, University of Washington
- Knox College IL, Richard Stockton College, NJ
- Weston High School, MA; Spacenkill High School, NY
- Viewpoint High School, CA; Owatonna High School, MN
- Omaha High School, NB; Oregon High School, WI

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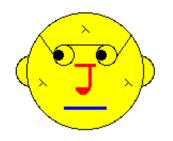
Plans



- Expect to finish the HtDC textbook this year
- Plan to run one week workshops covering HtDP and HtDC for the next three years in Utah, California, New York, and Massachusetts
- Lecture notes, solutions to exercise sets, more libraties
- Full support web site
- Online community listserve







ProfessorJ

Web sites:

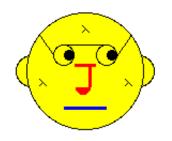
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http://www.ccs.neu.edu/jpt







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