The Carpentries

A New Year Message from The Carpentries' Executive Director

January 9, 2018

One of my favorite sticky note moments involved two sticky notes, red and green, folded into origami cranes, that I received after a workshop. Maybe it was just idle hands working away during an explanatory section, but it seemed to me to be a quiet 'thank you' for the workshop, one that recognized that there were both good things and bad things in the process of learning, but that they could balance out and create something new and beautiful.

In The Carpentries, we teach people computational tools and approaches, and work to build confidence, so that people can answer research questions, solve problems, and create new solutions that can impact science, scholarship and society for the better.

"When we give others a chance to fulfill their greatest potential, we all win." - Michelle Obama

Data and computers aren't important on their own. It's the people who use the data and write the code to answer questions who hold that power. As there are ever more opportunities to use computational skills and approaches, and fewer and fewer people with the right skills, we skew who is able to ask important questions and impact society. That's why it's so crucial to democratize data skills, scaling who has access to training and creating a community of practice that values not just the tools, but the people who use them and teach them.

Software Carpentry and Data Carpentry are grounded in this idea of respect and inclusivity and value for the people who teach and learn. While workshops were the original seed, the true strength of the Carpentries comes from its community.

As Software and Data Carpentry merge to form The Carpentries, we have an opportunity to continue to grow this community, to train others, and each other, and to reach new communities - whether that?s geographies or domains or even a research group down the hall. We not only provide effective training that emphasizes open and reproducible research practices, but we are exemplars of how to work collaboratively and inclusively. We don't hit the mark every day, but it's the ethos of who we are and the research we want to see in the world.

As The Carpentries, we'll continue to work with you, to support you in your teaching and in continuing to learn, to connect you with each other, and respond to what communities of instructors and learners need. Our commitment is to effective, inclusive and accessible training in computational skills, and openness and reproducibility in our own work. We are excited about the continued journey ahead and grateful to everyone who has been an instructor, a learner, a helper, a mentor, a lesson maintainer, or a champion.

I truly believe in the power of our community, and 'the Carpentries way of teaching' to change how we work with data and expand the number of people who get to do that work. As Executive Director, I'm grateful for this opportunity to help lead The Carpentries in the next steps of our journey and most importantly to empower the organization and the Carpentries community to reach their full potential.

– Dr. Tracy K. Teal, Executive Director