



CodeNect: Visual Programming Software for Learning Fundamentals of Programming

Brandon B. Lim-it, Jaykel O. Punay

May, 2021



Introduction

- Technology is constantly progressing and improving
- Programming is essential in the field of technology
- Programming is a discipline
- Programming is difficult
- Learning programming is more difficult



Statement of the Problem

The fundamental concepts of programming are essential basics that are necessary for programmers to master. Concepts such as:

- Syntax and Semantics
- Data Types and Data Structures
- Logic and Conditionals
- Loops and Algorithm
- Memory

are key to easily understanding and getting better at programming as programming is a discipline (Prahofer, Hurnaus, Wirth, and Mossenbock, 2007).



Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to develop a CodeNect: Visual Programming Software that will help in learning the fundamentals of programming.

Specifically, this study seeks:

- Identify the concepts learners find difficult to understand through conducted survey.
- Analyze the problems through a Ishikawa/Fishbone Diagram.
- Design the system using the Use Case Diagrams.
- Test the usability, functionality of the software using Experience-based test design.
- Evaluate the acceptability of the software using the ISO 9126.



Objectives of the Study

- Develop the software with the following main features:
 - ▶ Visual Nodes Module
 - ▶ Filesystem Module
 - ▶ Input/Output Module
 - ▶ Debug Module
 - ▶ Simulation Module
 - ▶ Transpiler Module
 - ▶ Assessment Module



Significance of the Study

Students

The software helps in the education and improvement in the knowledge, skills, understanding, and expertise of the students and learners about programming. Thus, allowing them to compete and increasing the opportunities for their careers.

Teachers

The software provides assistance for teachers and instructors to teach and demo programming concepts through visualization. This aids in relieving workload, stress, and maximizing lessons each class time.



Significance of the Study

Educational Institutions

The software benefits educational institutions like university for computer laboratory classes by providing a free software oriented for the purpose of learning

Developers

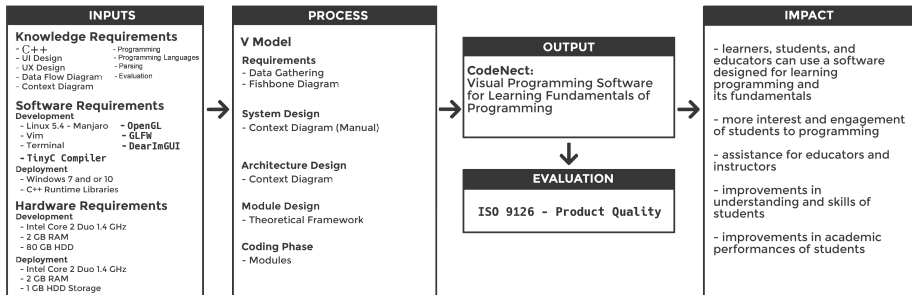
The software provides learning experience for the developers and researchers in preparation for software development career.

Researchers

This study serves as a guide and reference in the field of software development and education for future researchers.



Conceptual Framework of the Study





Scope and Limitations of the Study

Simplicity and Functionality

The software will prioritize simple and basic functionalities over numerous features for the purpose of learning and education.

Stand-alone Program

The software will have no account management and can be run without any hassle. The software works perfectly in offline mode.

Terminal-based

The software is limited to simulating text-based or command/terminal prompts as the priority is learning the fundamentals of programming.



Scope and Limitations of the Study

Visual Nodes Module

Nodes are graphical elements that serve as the building blocks of the software. Nodes can be used as a variable, logic, and conditionals

Filesystem Module

Serves as the interface between the software and the user's machine for handling files such as creation, modification, reading, and deletion.



Scope and Limitations of the Study

Input/Output Module

The module is responsible for processing and responding events and performing actions based on the event such as key press, mouse click, and mouse movement.

Debug Module

This module will linter and give feedback and indication to the user whenever there is an attempt to perform an action that is faulty in logic



Scope and Limitations of the Study

Simulation Module

The process of simulation involves the compiling, building, and running the visual code is executed by this module

Transpiler Module

This module transpiles the visual code made by the user into source code in target programming language



Scope and Limitations of the Study

Assessment Module

The functionality of providing exercises designed for the learning of topics and concepts in programming and evaluation of the results are handled by this module



Methodology - Materials

Software Requirements - Development

- Linux 5.4 kernel with Manjaro distribution as Operating System
- Terminal for running commands
- Vim for text and code editing
- GLFW and OpenGL for rendering
- DearImGui and ImNodes for user-interface base framework
- C++ programming language



Methodology - Method

V-Model

This model follows the relationships between each of the different phases in the life cycle of the development process, each with an associated testing phase.

The primary focus and purpose of this model is to improve the efficiency of development and to ensure the effectiveness of the software.



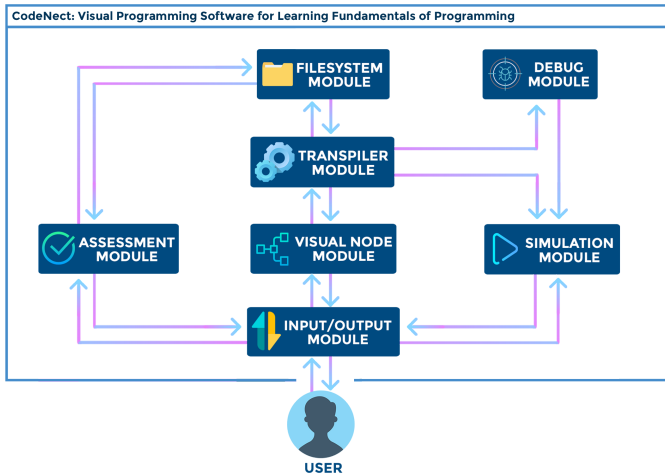
Methodology - V-Model

Phases of V-Model

- Requirements
- System Design
- Architecture Design
- Module Design
- Implementation and Coding
- Testings



System Architecture





Results and Discussion

Likert Scale for Software Evaluation

LIKERT SCALE	
RANGE	INTEPRETATION
4.21 - 5.00	Excellent
3.41 - 4.20	Very Good
2.61 - 3.40	Good
1.81 - 2.60	Fair
1.00 - 1.80	Poor



Technical Evaluation

Technical Evaluators

- 10 IT/CS professionals
- Software downloaded from Google Drive
- Software evaluated through Google Form



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Overall of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
Functionality	4.33	0.82	excellent
Reliability	4.00	0.85	very good
Usability	4.10	0.83	very good
Efficiency	4.40	0.77	excellent
Maintainability	4.30	0.75	excellent
Portability	4.55	0.76	excellent
User-friendliness	4.43	0.67	excellent
Average	4.30	0.78	excellent



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Functionality of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Informative (The information is clear, concise and informative to the intended audience.)	4.00	1.05	very good
2. Accurate (The software provides accurate and correct data.)	4.40	0.70	excellent
3. Interoperability (The modules are interconnected to each other and functions as a whole.)	4.60	0.70	excellent
Average	4.33	0.82	excellent



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Reliability of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Reliable (The software is reliable in normal use.)	4.00	0.94	very good
2. Bug free (Software is bug free.)	3.79	0.95	good
3. Standard Equipment (The system uses standard equipment that is reliable, widely available and applicable to a variety of users.)	4.30	0.67	excellent
Average	4.00	0.85	very good



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Usability of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Understandability (The software is easy to understand.)	4.00	1.05	very good
2. Operability (The software is easily operated by the intended user.)	4.20	0.63	very good
3. Learnability (The program is attractive and interesting; it motivates users to continue using the program.)	4.20	1.03	very good
Average	4.10	0.83	very good



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Efficiency of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Special equipment (If the program requires special equipment, the requirements are minimal and clearly stated by the developer.)	4.40	0.70	excellent
2. Storage (The program doesn't consume large amount of memory that can slow down the processing of the system.)	4.40	0.84	excellent
3. Detection (The program can easily identify the cause of failure within the software.)	4.40	0.84	excellent
Average	4.40	0.77	excellent



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Maintainability of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Function (The effort required to change the system functions is minimal.)	4.30	0.82	excellent
2. Process (The program is stable that if when something is changed, it will not affect the processing of the system.)	4.30	0.82	excellent
3. Test (The effort needed to test the system is minimal.)	4.30	0.67	excellent
Average	4.30	0.75	excellent



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Portability of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Installation (The effort required to install the system is minimal.)	4.70	0.67	excellent
2. Adaptability (The system has the ability to adapt to new specifications or operating environments.)	4.40	0.84	excellent
Average	4.55	0.76	excellent



Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the User-Friendliness of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Clarity of controls (Information about controls are understandable and available to the users.)	4.10	0.88	very good
2. Objectivity of contents (The language is non-discriminatory. Content is free from race, ethnic, gender, age and other stereotypes.)	4.90	0.32	excellent
3. Typographical Accuracy (The content is free from spelling and grammatical errors.)	4.30	0.82	excellent
Average	4.43	0.67	excellent



Technical Evaluation

Feedbacks

An interesting approach to teaching programming, I can see how assessments system can be used to teach data structures and algorithms in the future. Underlying C representation can also be instrumental in teaching proper memory management and even more complex concepts like cache. Overall software leaves a very positive first impression and a good extension opportunity.

Functionalities and features are working well. The software will be at best on its user-friendliness with sample demos at the menu.

Great Application!, I suggest it to have a version running on Linux based OS and in Mac OS also.



Non-Technical Evaluation

Non-Technical Evaluators

- 12 students with programming subjects
- Software downloaded from Google Drive
- Software evaluated through Google Form
- YouTube video for tutorial on basic usage of the software



Non-Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Overall of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
Functionality	4.69	0.49	excellent
Reliability	4.41	0.67	excellent
Usability	4.37	0.73	excellent
User-friendliness	4.50	0.60	excellent
Average	4.50	0.62	excellent



Non-Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Functionality of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Informative (The information is clear, concise and informative to the intended audience.)	4.67	0.49	excellent
2. Accurate (The software provides accurate and correct data.)	4.83	0.39	excellent
3. Interoperability (The modules are interconnected to each other and functions as a whole.)	4.58	0.67	excellent
Average	4.69	0.52	excellent



Non-Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Reliability of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Reliable (The software is reliable in normal use.)	4.41	0.67	excellent



Non-Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the Usability of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Understandability (The software is easy to understand.)	4.41	0.67	excellent
2. Learnability (The software is easily operated by the intended user.)	4.33	0.78	excellent
Average	4.37	0.73	excellent



Non-Technical Evaluation

Summary Table for the User-Friendliness of the Software

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INTERPRETATION
1. Clarity of controls (Information about controls are understandable and available to the users.)	4.25	0.62	excellent
2. Objectivity of contents (The language is non-discriminatory. Content is free from race, ethnic, gender, age and other stereotypes.)	4.83	0.39	excellent
3. Typographical Accuracy (The content is free from spelling and grammatical errors.)	4.3	0.82	excellent
Average	4.50	0.60	excellent



Non-Technical Evaluation

Feedbacks

This is very useful for IT/CS students.

The interface of the program encouraged me to experiment and try out its different features.

The software needs to be more user-friendly. Without a manual, it is a little bit difficult to navigate and sometimes confusing. But the functionality of the software is built very well and the data shown are accurate.

Easy to understand just need time. better with instructions

Thank You and Its pleasure to be one of the first user of the app! Good day!

Excellent

Good program and file structure. It runs in Windows 10 w/o error.



Summary

- Visual Programming Software for Learning Fundamentals of Programming
- Uses visual elements instead of traditional text-based programming
- Software usable by anyone with interest in learning programming
- Supplementary software for instructors of programming



Summary

Seven Modules

- Visual Nodes Module
- Input/Output Module
- Filesystem Module
- Transpiler Module
- Debug Module
- Simulation Module
- Assessment Module



Summary

Evaluation

- 10 Technical Evaluators
- 12 Non-Technical Evaluators
- ISO 9126
- Overall software evaluated as "EXCELLENT"



Conclusion

- Seven modules developed and completed
- Unit test and Integration test
- Technical evaluation overall mean = 4.30 (EXCELLENT)
- Technical evaluation overall mean = 4.50 (EXCELLENT)



Conclusion

The lack of familiarity when it comes to visual programming has affected the metrics for usability for both the non-technical and technical evaluators as compared to traditional text-based programming, visual programming is rarely used or known.



Unit Test

```
[doctest] doctest version is "2.4.6"
[doctest] run with "--help" for options
=====
../test.cpp:36:
TEST CASE: Testing Input/Output Module

0.000032 s: Testing Input/Output Module
=====
../test.cpp:59:
TEST CASE: Testing Filesystem Module

Opening invalid project

0.001556 s: Testing Filesystem Module
=====
../test.cpp:94:
TEST CASE: Testing Visual Nodes Module

Testing String Logic
To Array

0.063005 s: Testing Visual Nodes Module
=====
../test.cpp:727:
TEST CASE: Testing Transpiler Module

0.011802 s: Testing Transpiler Module
=====
../test.cpp:745:
TEST CASE: Testing Debugger Module

0.000227 s: Testing Debugger Module
=====
../test.cpp:773:
TEST CASE: Testing Simulation Module

Testing nested For-Loops
outer iteration #4
inner iteration #4

0.010103 s: Testing Simulation Module
=====
../test.cpp:823:
TEST CASE: Testing Assessments Module

2.820001 s: Testing Assessments Module
=====
[doctest] test cases: 7 | 7 passed | 0 failed | 0 skipped
[doctest] assertions: 558 | 558 passed | 0 failed |
[doctest] Status: SUCCESS!
```



Recommendation

- Add more programming language target for transpilation. e.g Java
- Increase the number of available nodes that can be used
- Expand the number of assessment exercises
- Expand the number of documents for guidelines and solutions
- In-depth tutorial/demo for absolute beginners



Thank you so much and God bless all!