

DEBUGGING: AN UNDERUSED TEACHING TOOL

The image displays two IDE windows illustrating debugging capabilities.

Top Window (Python): Shows a Python script `temp.py` with the following code:

```
1 a = list(range(4))
2 b = a
3 c = a.copy()
4 a[2] = 6
5 pass
```

The **VARIABLES** pane shows the state of the program:

- Locals:**
 - `a`: [0, 1, 6, 3, 100]
 - `b`: [0, 1, 6, 3, 100]
 - `c`: [0, 1, 2, 3]
- Globals:** (empty)

The **WATCH** pane shows the following expressions:

- `a == c`: False
- `a == b`: True

The **DEBUG CONSOLE** shows the output: `a.append(100)`.

Bottom Window (Java): Shows a Java method `Credit` with the following code:

```
public void Credit(double amount)
{
    if (amount < 0)
    {
        throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException("amount");
    }
    m_balance += amount;
}
```

The **DEBUG CONSOLE** shows the output: `m_balance += amount;` with a value of `5.77` and a message `≤ 1ms elapsed`.

STARTING TO
PROGRAM IS HARD

STRUGGLING STUDENTS
CAN BE EASY TO MISS

BUT THEY EXIST

TEACHING METHODS

Example

Strings:

```
x = str("s1") # x will be 's1'
y = str(2)    # y will be '2'
z = str(3.0)  # z will be '3.0'
```

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We can see our treasure increase each week by creating another variable, called coins, and using a loop:

```
>>> found_coins = 20
>>> magic_coins = 70
>>> stolen_coins = 3
❶ >>> coins = found_coins
❷ >>> for week in range(1, 53):
❸     coins = coins + magic_coins - stolen_coins
❹     print('Week %s = %s' % (week, coins))
```

At ❶, the variable coins is loaded with the value of the variable found_coins; this is our starting number. The next line at ❷ sets up the for loop, which will run the commands in the block (the block is made up of the lines at ❸ and ❹). Each time it loops, the variable week is loaded with the next number in the range of 1 through 52.

The line at ❸ is a bit more complicated. Basically, each week we want to add the number of coins we've magically created and subtract the number of coins that were stolen by the raven. Think of the variable coins as something like a treasure chest. Every week, the new coins are piled into the chest. So this line really means, "Replace the contents of the variable coins with the number of my current coins, plus what I've created this week." Basically, the equal sign (=) is a bossy piece of code that says, "Work out some stuff on the right first, and then save it for later, using the name on the left."

The line at ❹ is a print statement using placeholders, which prints the week number and the total number of coins (so far) to the screen. (If that doesn't make sense to you, reread "Embedding



THE POINT

[...]