

Project 1 PR

Memo

To: Cecelia Musselman
From: Maeve Gaus
cc: Paul Langton
Date: 9/17/19
Re: Paul Langton Project1 PR

Summary

This paper is about how through various instruction in his years at University, the author learned several key concepts about the nature of problems in relation to his Computer Science major. First of all, the author discusses how a professor in his Fundies I class was able to help him understand a complex concept by changing the way that he thought about the problem. Next, the author writes about his discovery in one of his classes that not all problems can be solved by computers and that there is a way to judge the difficulty of a problem. In the following section of the paper, the author writes about one meaningful computer science class he took with a great professor that changed his views about computer science and increased his enthusiasm for the subject. Finally, the author summarizes the teaching styles he experienced during his years so far at Northeastern University and how they effected his learning.

Major Points

Beginning with the first paragraph, I think that the paper would have more of an impact if the first sentence was omitted entirely so that the paper instead started with "Programming computers is easy". I think that this would be a more effective way of grabbing the attention of the reader. Besides that, I think that the first paragraph is well written and a good beginning to the paper. I like how in the last sentence of the paper the author mentions what he will be discussing and investigating in the rest of the essay. This reminds me of how a physics lab is structured since you do the same thing at the end of the introduction section.

I found the first part of the second section (Abstract) to be very confusing as a non-computer science major. I did not follow the part about recursion and don't understand the two different ways that it was taught to the author. I also wish that the author elaborated more about the history behind the learning style his teacher used. There is one quick mention of Matthias Felleisen but there are no further details. Even though I did not understand the specifics of what the author was being taught, I did get the overall message the author was trying to convey. The last sentence of the paragraph helped with this in explaining the purpose of the story.

The next section of the paper, titled Difficulty, I think starts off strong. It flows well from the previous paragraph and keeps the readers attention. I was confused about the term NP-Complete, but the author did a decent job elaborating that it meant there was no computationally efficient solution. I also got lost at the end of the paper with mention about Boolean satisfiability and reduction techniques. These concepts were briefly mentioned and not elaborated so I did not understand their purpose. I think that the author could have elaborated more on this section, which would also help him get closer to the 1,000 required word count.

The title of the fourth section, What's Left, I think feels out of place compared to the others. I would suggest something that is similar to a heading you would see in a lab report such as "Results". Besides the title, I think that this section is strong. It is a lot less informal than the previous two sections of the essay which I prefer. I think that one thing that would make the essay flow better is to make the Abstract and Difficulty sections more casual, similarly to the Introduction and What's Left sections.

Finally, in the last section titled Instruction, I think that the author ended the essay in an effective manner that reflected the message he was trying to convey throughout the whole paper. However, I think that he could have elaborated on the part about how "the lecture has taken a lot of flunk in modern times".

Minor Points

Overall, I think that the author did a good job in combining humor with technical terms and concepts. I also really liked the formatting of a lab report and think that the author should keep it, although some of the titles should be changed, as mentioned in the Major points section. There were also a few things missing from the paper including a title and an acknowledgment page. The paper was also under the word count, but if the author added a bit more information in the areas I suggested, I think that it would bring up the word count to above 1,000. Finally, there were a few grammatical errors such as comma placements. For example, there should not be a comma after the line "This style is accredited to John Dewey" in the final section. Also, in the last section, I do not think homework should be plural.