

Functional Programming in Education

George Wilson

Data61/CSIRO

george.wilson@data61.csiro.au

22nd May 2018



Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs

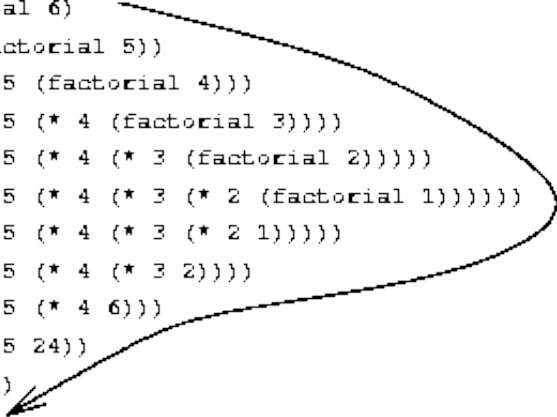
Second Edition

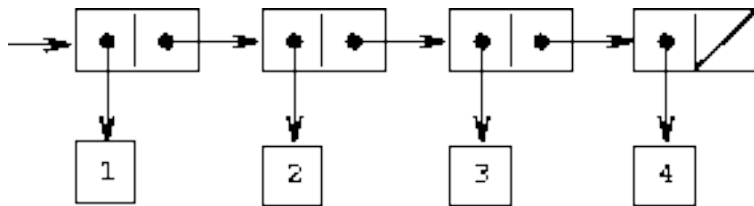


Harold Abelson and
Gerald Jay Sussman
with Julie Sussman

```
(define (map f l)
  (if (null? l)
      nil
      (cons (f (car l)) (map f (cdr l))))))
```


```
{factorial 6}  
(* 6 {factorial 5})  
(* 6 (* 5 {factorial 4}))  
(* 6 (* 5 (* 4 {factorial 3})))  
(* 6 (* 5 (* 4 (* 3 {factorial 2}))))  
(* 6 (* 5 (* 4 (* 3 (* 2 {factorial 1}))))))  
(* 6 (* 5 (* 4 (* 3 (* 2 1)))))  
(* 6 (* 5 (* 4 (* 3 2))))  
(* 6 (* 5 (* 4 6)))  
(* 6 (* 5 24))  
(* 6 120)  
720
```





A critique of Abelson and Sussman
- or -
Why calculating is better than scheming

Philip Wadler
Programming Research Group
11 Keble Road
Oxford, OX1 3QD


received April 1980

Abelson and Sussman have written an excellent textbook which may start a revolution in the way programming is taught [Abelson and Sussman 1985a, b]. Instead of emphasizing a particular programming language, they emphasize standard engineering techniques as they apply to programming. Still, their textbook is intimately tied to the Scheme dialect of Lisp. I believe that the same approach used in their text, if applied to a language such as KRC or Miranda, would result in an even better introduction to programming as an engineering discipline. My belief has strengthened as my experience in teaching with Scheme and with KRC has increased.

```
(define (map proc items)
  (if (null? items)
      nil
      (cons (proc (car items))
              (map proc (cdr items))))))
```

```
map :: (a -> b) -> [a] -> [b]
map f l =
  case l of
    []      -> []
    (x : xs) -> f x : map f xs
```


Thanks for listening!