

# Foreword



In over 25 years of teaching Java, one of the recurring questions I am asked is why one would bother to pursue Java certification. Obviously one answer is that it might be helpful in pursuit of a job, or a better job, as a Java programmer. But whether that is relevant is dependent on the job market. There is another answer that does not depend on the ever-changing ratio of applicants to vacancies, and it is the answer that I have always preferred. That answer is that it is good for anyone who claims to take a skill seriously to do two things. One is to be measured by the standards of one's peers, and the other is to push oneself to learn and improve continuously. Being satisfied with "good enough" must surely be a sign of some degree of mediocrity.

These days Java training is widely available from many sources (including video-based training that I offer). Each has its pros and cons, but what makes Khalid and Vasily's book stand out is probably the thoroughness of the treatment that is offered in these pages. Khalid has a long history teaching at the university level, and good teaching is a very different skill from merely being an expert. Far too much of what we are offered as training or self-study material these days is, on closer analysis, simply an enumeration of facts. Good teaching requires building not just knowledge but understanding, layer upon layer, so that it sticks.

One aspect of teaching and learning that is sadly little understood is how we learn. If you want to get better at lifting heavy weights, most of us would recognize that somewhere in the process, you have to do just that: lift heavy weights. That is essentially true of all human skills. We must practice (and practice diligently) those things at which we wish to succeed. In the case of learning, what we want to be able to do is to recall facts and apply them on demand. That means, quite literally, that we must practice the act of recalling those facts. To this end, you will find extensive review questions between these covers. These will provide you with the opportunity to practice the act of recall and thereby solidify your knowledge and understanding. That way, not only can you expect to pass what is undoubtedly a challenging exam, but you can also expect to become a better Java programmer.

Good luck in your study!

Simon Roberts  
President, Dancing Cloud Services, LLC