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### Destined to Computers

Learning a second language is like exploring a whole different world. But not when it is a computer language. A lot of people have a lot of trouble learning to read, write, and speak English. Some of those people have the ability to learn a computer language with no trouble. People might ask themselves, “How is it possible for people to have less trouble to learn how to write a code with no syntax error but when writing an essay they make a lot of mistakes?” The answer to that is simple, we are *Destined to Computers*.

During 7<sup>th</sup> grade I was one of the smartest kid in a classroom of 25 students. Even though I was the smartest kid in mathematics and science, it did not mean that I was the smartest in other things. For example, I had no experience in using a computer at all. That was actually not a big problem for me because none of my classmate knew how to use a computer. It was not a problem until I went to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. During my 8<sup>th</sup> grade I was forced to study in a different town because 8<sup>th</sup> grade was not being offered in my hometown. In my hometown, Yabanal, La Vega, Dominican Republic, there was no family that could consider themselves in the middle class. I did not see my family from my mother’s side as poor because some of our family members had jobs and we were able to have a lot of things, but now, as a college student, I think about my past and consider my family as poor.

The other school was located on the other side of a river, which I crossed every day with my two cousins to get there. In my new school, class was more challenging and difficult. Many times I was asked to print papers or images, which was a problem since I did not know how to use a computer. Fortunately, I had a friend that knew how to use computers. He was about 20 years old while I was only 13, but he still treated me as his little brother and even taught me the basics of using a computer. It was worth it to spend time with him. He taught me how to use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, how to search for things in a browser, and other things.

I remember the first time I used a computer like it was yesterday. I went to a computer center with my friend. He was not teaching me, he just told me to turn on a computer and use it. So I did. It was more like an attempt to use it. I spent like an hour just moving the mouse, clicking, and looking at other people to see what they do.

When I went back home, I spent some time just sitting on the ground trying to visualize the screen of a computer and drawing what was in my thoughts. Since that day, I started going to my friend's house and use his computer (without knowing what to do). The first time I went to his house he saw me trying to use the computer and noticed that I actually did not know how to use a computer. That's when the lessons started. Since that day I started to feel smart when I was home. I told my mother about my experience using a computer.

I remember a few months later when my sister got her first computer. I felt addicted to the computer and used it like it was mine. My mother and my uncle tried to use it sometimes. I supposed that from their point of view they were learning, but from my perspective, they were just making a mess. They touched the screen trying to move stuff around, double click things

they were not supposed to double click, and when I tried to tell them to do something they asked me to let them do it themselves. Since I knew how to do things in the computer I felt smart and concerned about the fact that most of my family members did not know how to use a computer.

During my 4 years of high school here in the United States, these facts kept me thinking about all of the other people that don't know how to use computers. I also started thinking about all those kids that are living without getting educated and not having the opportunity that a lot of us have. When I think about this I feel mad rather than concerned because there are a lot of teenagers that are wasting time in high school while there are a lot of poor kids that could be actually learning. If those poor kids had the opportunity that those teenagers have, I'm sure they would not be wasting time.

Today, as a computer Science major, I spend more time using computers and learning about them than doing anything else. To be clear, most of us, except those that can't afford a computer or don't have access to one, spend time on computers and other technologies. For some of us, the cyber-world means more than just the world of computers, but the world in which we live in.

I came to the United States without knowing how to speak or write English and I was still able to learn. Even though I'm not good writing and speaking English I can still learn about computers, because even though it's like learning a new language, it's easier than learning English.

It is clear how my past experience has led me to choose computer science as my major. I am looking forward to create things that will allow people to interact with computers in an easier way. I want to make it easier for people to learn about computers while helping my family with our financial problems, and majoring in computer science is the only way to make it a reality.