**Tivadar Debnar**

**ICON College Computing HND**

**Programming Assignment**

**Introduction**

**What are algorithms and their process in building applications?**

“*An algorithm is an explicit, precise, unambiguous, mechanically-executable sequence of elementary instructions, usually intended to accomplish a specific purpose*”. (Erickson, 1999)

We can design algorithms to solve a wide variety of problems, let it be as trivial as summing an array of numbers, or more sophisticated functionalities, like encryption, and graphic rendering.

A standard method for writing an algorithm for an advanced computing problem is ***decomposition***, where we break down the given task to several minor sub-routines to the point, we end up with a bunch of specific sub-functions that are easily solvable with clear, straightforward instructions.

Another common tactic is called ***abstraction***, where the programmer reduces all unnecessary details that pollute the function, so the cardinal steps to the solution will become more articulate.

Suppose, we describe the algorithm as a ***language-neutral*** representation of the implementation of a particular problem. Instantly becomes apparent that a significant advantage of algorithms is that the author is ***not bound to a specific*** programming ***language*** and its ***syntax***. More importantly, even non-programmers can have a deeper understanding of the program’s internal mechanisms, as algorithms are simple English instructions.

A further benefit of algorithms is that when we deconstruct a program into smaller chunks (decomposition), debugging becomes more unproblematic as we can ***analyse each segment independently***. In cases, algorithms with well-defined functionalities and precisely stated instructions could eliminate bugs even before they would appear in the code-base in a later phase of the development cycle or worst, in the production code.

**Determine the steps taken in writing code.**

When designing new applications, or new functionalities for existing ones, the best-practice is to analyse and define the given task accurately with its input, output, and specific requirements for overall layout and behaviour first, then create algorithms with flow-charts, if necessary. Our ***algorithm will serve as a backbone*** of our logical approach. This phase of development intends to compose a ***generalised*** yet precise idea of the flow of the program.

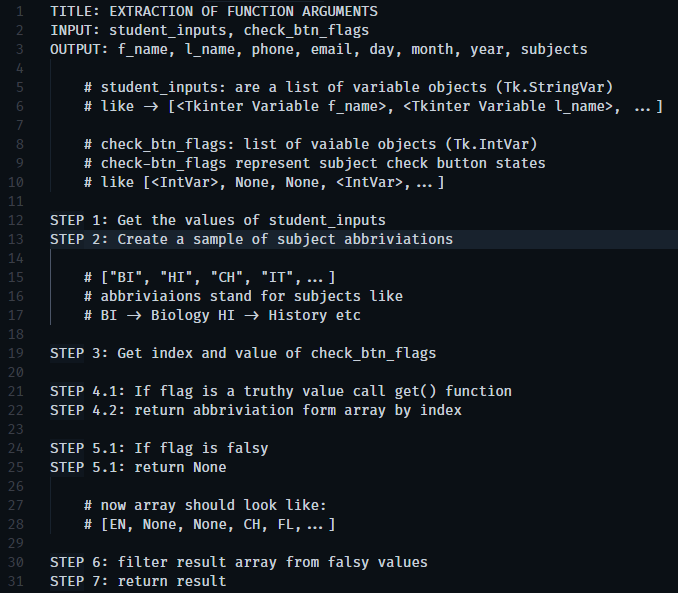
When the logic of the algorithm fulfils all aspects of the requirements, we can transform it into pseudocode. Many developers write algorithms like pseudocode, but these two terms are not interchangeable. Pseudocode is “*a set of practices and conventions for producing very precise, minimally ambiguous descriptions of algorithms.*”(Bennett, 2015) Pseudo-code features various ***flow-control structures***, such as if-else, do-while, switch-case, but it has no special syntax of its own, and the programmer can accommodate it similar to his language preference or adjust it to the company's guide-line.

Pseudo-code is typically written in a text format with the extension of .txt, .doc, therefore it is *not* an executable file, and can occasionally be somewhat confusing for readers with no prior experience in programming. It is an algorithm written with a non-specific syntax, and such, it is situated halfway between algorithms and programming languages. As creating algorithms and pseudo-code can be time-consuming, some developers write code ***impulsively*** without any preparatory measures, consequently creating ***malfunctions*** in existing features or even breaking the mechanism of an entire application.

When the algorithm or pseudo-code - ideally both - is completed, then we can finally convert it into the actual source code. This conversion is less challenging for developers than jumping straight into writing the code in specified programming or scripting languages. If a solution to a problem seems overly complicated without a good reason behind, the development team or a programmer might restructure the algorithm's logic or experiment with other approaches. Changing strategies in the initial stages is cost and time-efficient compared to rewriting or debugging thousands of lines of code.

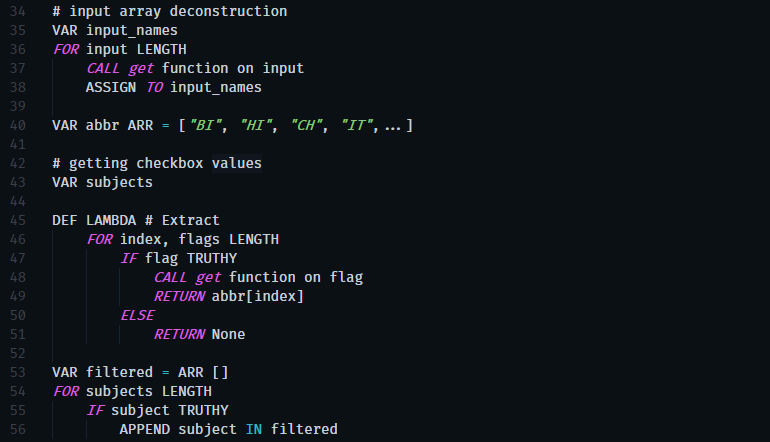
Next, programming languages and frameworks are chosen, tailored to the specifics of the application, as opposed to personal preferences. If the preceding steps were performed in an organised manner, the actual development should go on without much hassle. While generating the source code, every member of the team has to commit their code to a version control system (Git, GitHub), and each change to the master branch must be tested before commit. Repositories can be forked and merged but merging to the master branch is usually done by a senior member of the team. If the application has reached the required standards and it had gone through numerous in-depth functionality and unit testing by QA (Quality Assurance) team, the application is ready for deployment and release, in one or more stages, according to business requirements.

**Examine the implementation of an algorithm in a suitable language. Evaluate the relationship between the written algorithm and the code variant.**



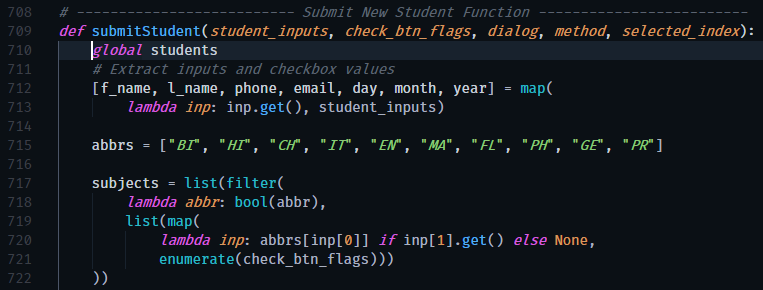
**Figure 1** - Algorithm of Function Argument Extraction

As we can see, the algorithm is defining the cardinal steps of the program in conventional English, but it lacks the specifications of syntax and language context. Even if the above example is an abstract problem, and can be challenging to comprehend for non-programmers completely, it has the potential of ***representing the overall idea*** behind the program.



**Figure 2** – Pseudocode

As we can see (figure 2), our pseudocode does not reflect any specific languages' syntax, and it temporarily obtains several traits from many languages (VAR, DEF, LAMBDA, IF, FOR). Meanwhile, it also gives the freedom for creating fictional language components, such as ARR, CALL.



**Figure 3** - Source Code

The real implementation (figure 3), however, cannot imitate the pseudocode entirely because of the characteristics of the Python language. Even though the similarities are insignificant at first glance, the applied logic - in all three examples - is identical.

**Programming paradigms**

"By the word paradigm, we understand a set of ***patterns and practices*** used to achieve a certain goal. For an idea to become a paradigm, it should be picked up globally in many independent ***organisations and societies***."(Bartoníček,2014)

There are many programming paradigms in use today:

* ***Imperative:*** uses statements to change a programs state. It is generally ***written linearly***. "Imperative programming developed from consideration of the hardware."(Harle, 1988) A good indicator of the imperative approach is the presence of GOTO statements, like in Basic, Fortran or Assembly.
* ***Object-oriented (OOP):*** As Dr Nurnberg explained it at the Imperial College of London: that OOP encourages to ***decompose*** a problem into related ***subgroups***, where each subgroup becomes a ***self-contained object*** that contains its instructions and data that relate to that object. The four principles of OOP are ***abstraction, encapsulation, inheritance*** and ***polymorphism***. There are many programming languages for OOP, like Java, Python and Ruby, and many others that support classes and OOP design like Javascript through - so-called - syntactic sugar.
* ***Functional:*** handles computation as of mathematical functions and avoids changing the state of global data. Functional programming uses ***pure functions*** that always return identical results if it is invoked with the same arguments, therefore ***preventing side effects***. Languages built around functional programming are Haskell, Swift, Clojure.
* ***Logical:*** express facts on problems in a system of formal logic. Rules are addressed as ***logical clauses***, including a head and a body. For instance, A is true if B1, B2, and B3 are all true. Such languages are DataLog and ProLog.

Erickson, J., 1999. Algorithms.

Bennett, N., 2015. Introduction to Algorithms and Pseudocode.

Bartoníček, Jan. (2014). Programming Language Paradigms & The Main Principles of Object-Oriented Programming. CRIS - Bulletin of the Centre for Research and Interdisciplinary Study.

Harle, R., 1988. Object Oriented Programming. In *Computer Software and Applications Conference* (Vol. 4, pp. 51-57).

Nurnberg. R. (date unknown) Imperial College of London, Object Oriented Programming in C++.