

Revealing Programming Language Abstractions

An Excerpt of nand-to-tetris – in Reverse – Using Smalltalk

GymInf Individual Project

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Abstract

Not an *abstract* yet, but the original project description:

Ziel des Projekts ist, ein empirisch abgestütztes Instrument für den Programmier-Unterricht am Gymnasium zu entwickeln, in welchem Schüler:innen verschiedene Abstraktionsebenen interaktiv erleben können.

Auf der Basis von Processing mit Python Syntax (<https://py.processing.org/>) soll der einerseits der visuelle Ablauf eines Programms, aber auch die Parsing-Schritte und die Übersetzung in Byte-Code Seite-an-Seite sicht- und untersuchbar gemacht werden, damit Schüler:innen die Auswirkungen ihres Programmcodes auf die Maschine live erleben können.

Die Entwicklung des Produkts wird theoretisch begleitet und das Produkt selbst empirisch geprüft werden.

Als Basis der Umsetzung dient Glamorous Toolkit, eine Entwicklungsumgebung basierend auf Smalltalk/Pharo, welche u.a. von Oscar Nierstrasz für Master- und Doktoratsstudiengänge weiterentwickelt worden ist.

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Introduction

Programming with Processing (by [6]) vs. "Little Man Computer" or "Human Resource Machine"

2

Leaky Abstractions when Teaching Programming

On the lack of connecting high-level languages with lower-level concepts

2.1 Didactic Approaches

See e.g. [7], [3], [1] or [2] only focusing on one aspect

2.2 Limitations of IDEs

Such as VS Code or Thonny not connecting the few views available

2.3 Leaky Abstractions

Where knowledge of lower abstraction levels might help

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Dealing with Abstractions

3.1 Top Down

Working downwards from gaming, as in [9]

3.2 Bottom Up

Running Tetris on NANDs as described in [8], [5]

3.3 Moldable Development

Referring to [4].

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Processing Abstractions

4.1 Development of "Processing Abstractions"

Excerpts from gt-exploration Lepiter pages

4.2 Abstraction Levels

For each a short problem description and a presentation of the chosen approach:

4.2.1 Source Code

4.2.2 Abstract Syntax Tree

4.2.3 Transpilation/IR

4.2.4 Machine Code

4.2.5 Output

5

PA in Practice

How students reacted to using it

5.1 First Round

5.1.1 Setting

5.1.2 Observations

5.1.3 Student Feedback

5.1.4 Learnings

5.2 Second Round

5.2.1 Setting

5.2.2 Observations

5.2.3 Student Feedback

5.2.4 Learnings

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Conclusion

6.1 Future Work



Installing and Using Processing Abstractions

B

Data from Questionnaires

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