Teaching Alice and Python in an 18-week “Introduction to Programming” class is an excellent combination. When Alice is used to introduce beginning programming concepts such as conditions and repetition, students are able to make connections to these concepts when writing Python programs. Both Alice and Python are known as “easy beginners” languages, and in an effort to prepare students for my AP Computer Programming class, I started teaching this combination last fall. In the past, True Basic was the language taught in the “Introduction to Programming” class.

Teaching Alice at the beginning of a semester gets the students engaged so they easily discover many programming concepts on their own. After approximately five weeks, Python is taught so that a “traditional” language can assist in the transition to the AP course. After teaching 51 students on this schedule, I have found that many students use their free time to further explore Alice.

This semester I am teaching 17 of my former “Introduction to Programming” students in a Programming 2 class. I am continuing to teach a mixture of Alice and Python. During first semester the students learned lists in Python, so this semester we created lists and iterated through them in Alice—an easy task for them. We are currently creating classes in Python and they had already been exposed to objects and methods in Alice. In conclusion, the connections between the two languages make a great combination for a course.