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I have been involved in writing textbooks for this sequence for twenty-five years (I can't believe its been that long either!). In chronological order, I have published textbooks in the old classics such as Fortran, BASIC, Pascal (regular, UCSD, and Turbo), Modula-2, Ada, C, and in the newer languages, C++ and Java.

Until now, I think most CS faculty have used the procedural paradigm and structured programming in teaching CS1. The books we have used, for the most part, emphasize programming concepts and design over language syntax. Even with C++ and many of the Java texts so far, this has not changed. Most of our C++ courses and textbooks follow the AP approach of "using classes early and writing them later". The only difference in these books is when is later.

I think the question of "where to start writing classes in C++ (or Java)" is analogous to the question of "where to introduce procedures in Pascal". I remember Rich Pattis saying in jest at a SIGCSE meeting that the next Pascal book would introduce procedures in the preface. The only book that I recall that truly introduced procedures first did not have any impact in the Pascal market.

I think Java provides us with a real opportunity to change from the procedural paradigm to an objects-first approach. However, I notice that the Java books that are currently most popular haven't really done this. So I wonder whether faculty are prepared to do this. Those of us who come together in forums like this are generally in favor of making this paradigm switch, but many faculty have been teaching CS1 and CS2 for many years and are reluctant to change the way they have been doing things beyond changing the language they use. It will be interesting to see how this all develops.