

Position Statement
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I only get to teach CS1 infrequently, but whenever I do teach this class, I always feel like Charlie Brown trying to kick the football—I start out full of excitement that I’m finally going to “get it right,” only at the end to find myself lying on my back trying to figure out what went wrong.

Our course is a 4 semester credit hour class with two 75 minute classroom periods and one 2 hour closed lab per week. I will have 40 students subdivided in half for the lab time. I will also have available a graduate assistant for the first time. I do not want to end the semester lying on my back again. If anyone has answers (or hints of answers) or advice concerning the following issues, I would be most appreciative.

- How much lab time should be devoted to helping students develop technical skills in using the development environment (Solaris and g++) versus development of their problem-solving skills?
- How do you use the lab time to encourage students to experiment with possible solutions without it degenerating into hacking?
- Is it feasible to use class time for group problem solving in a class of size 40?
- Are weekly quizzes to make students do their advance reading a good investment of time? If not, what other strategies work?
- Besides email, downloading files, and web page question/answers, what are some other successful uses of the Internet in CS1?

A sincere thanks to all of you who have invested so much energy in developing texts and resources for CS1 that give me hope that I will one day kick the football.