OO Overkill
When Simple is Better than Not

Owen Astrachan
ola@cs.duke.edu
http://www.cs.duke.edu/~ola

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Fundamental Laws

• **First do no harm**
  • Hippocratic Oath

• **A robot may not injure a human being, or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm**
  • First law of Robots (Asimov)

• **You know you have achieved perfection in design, not when you have nothing more to add, but when you have nothing more to take away.**
  • Saint-Exupery

• **Do the simplest thing that could possibly work**
  • First Design Principle of Extreme Programming
Where are we going? (when do we get there?)

- **Object oriented programming is here to stay (for N years)**
  - What aspects of OOP and OO Design belong in FYI?
  - First Year Instruction must be about trade-offs
    - CS2 especially should be about algorithmic and design tradeoffs

- **How do we (should we) incorporate design patterns in FYI?**
  - Solving problems is important, patterns are intended to solve problems
  - We shouldn’t teach patterns, we should teach when they’re applicable (well, we should teach them too)

- **What’s the right programming and design methodology in FYI?**
  - It’s not PSP, it’s XP

- Teaching and curriculum design can reflect XP too
  - Be ready for change, hard to get it right from the start
Tension in Teaching OO Concepts

- Left to their own devices and designs, students cannot write correct and well-designed programs
  - Solution: Frameworks, Apprentice-Learning, add to existing code, implement a design-provided
  - Solution: Good design comes from experience, experience comes from bad design

- Students relish creating programs from scratch
  - Is it ok to use an API from JDK 1.x, from the book, from the course, from the assignment?
  - There’s no time to create interesting programs from scratch

- OO design patterns and skills don't necessarily scale down
Relevant Tenets of Extreme Programming

- **What parts of embracing change can we embrace in FYI?**
  - Evolutionary design, small releases, iterative enhancement
  - Simple design, don’t build for the future (will you need it?)
  - Lots of testing, testing, testing
  - Refactoring: change design, not functionality

- **What may be hard to embrace in FYI?**
  - Code the test first
  - Pair Programming
  - Business aspects: meetings, customers, …

- **Links**
  - [http://www.xprogramming.com/what_is_xp.htm](http://www.xprogramming.com/what_is_xp.htm)
  - [http://www.extremeprogramming.org/rules.html](http://www.extremeprogramming.org/rules.html)
  - [http://www.martinfowler.com/articles/designDead.html](http://www.martinfowler.com/articles/designDead.html)
Twenty-Questions meets binary trees

- Build a “game tree”, ask questions, add to knowledge, play again (later)

- Preliminary to RSG Nifty Assignment program

- Procedural version used, e.g., in book by Main and Savitch

- Used as an example of how to do it better in 1998 patterns paper
Goals of Twenty Questions assignment?

- **Familiarity with trees**
  - Reading, writing, traversing, changing structure
    - Preorder (read/write), postorder (cleanup)
  - Reinforce concepts with coding practice

- **Interesting and (somewhat) intriguing assignment**
  - Satisfaction higher when no guidance given
    - Student satisfaction not always a valid metric, but satisfaction impacts understanding and internalizing
  - Student constructed games shareable with classmates

- **Provides context/hook for later refactoring**
  - Revisit this in OO design course; CS2 introduces ideas and coding framework for later courses
Twenty Questions: the good, bad, and ugly

- **Factory classes**
  - Singleton?
    - Do it right
    - Do it simply

- **Adding knowledge**
  - Internal->Leaf
    - Accessor
    - Friend
    - State Pattern

- **Internalize patterns and design?**
  - Not used in subsequent programs
  - Acknowledged in later classes as “connect the dots” programming
Current version of Twenty Questions

- **Provide code that plays one game by reading the file**
  - No tree explicitly constructed, cannot add knowledge
  - Recursive nature of file reading mirrors tree construction

- **Provide no other classes/guidance: course covers trees**
  - Use plain-old-data, public data/struct approach to tree
  - Code from book and in class constructs trees, prints them, copies, finds height, … all using plain-old-data approach

- **Revisit program in later course (ideally same course, but …)**
  - Discuss factory, inheritance hierarchy, other OO concepts
  - Show how before/after approach and refactoring leads to more extendable program, *but why do that first?*
Trees: As simple as possible or too simple?

- **Forces:** introduce trees in a sequence of courses that rely on OO/procedural languages (OO + CS2 = ???)
  - NO: a course that follows a functional programming course
  - YES: to be followed by OO/software design course

- **Plain-old-data approach mirrors often-used source:** this doesn’t extend to abstract syntax trees, but it’s simple, understandable
  - What about “do it right from the start”?
    - Is an inheritance hierarchy for two node types right?
    - Is visitor warranted here?

- **Distributed computing/control is hard**
  - Two cases for recursion in one function vs in two classes
  - No study on this, but intuition and experience say harder
Trees: the old and new approach

```java
public class TreeFunctions {
    public static int count(PlainNode root) {
        if (root == null) return 0;
        return 1 + count(root.myLeft) + count(root.myRight);
    }
}

public class Printer {
    public static void inOrder(PlainNode root) {
        if (root == null) return;
        inOrder(root.myLeft);
        System.out.println(root.myInfo);
        inOrder(root.myRight);
    }
}
```

FYI: Objects and Patterns
java.util.TreeMap, understanding the source

```java
static class Entry {
    Object key;
    Object value;
    Entry left = null;
    Entry right = null;
    Entry parent;
    boolean color = BLACK;
    ...
}

public boolean containsValue(Object value) {
    return (value==null ? valueSearchNull(root)
            : valueSearchNonNull(root, value));
}

private boolean valueSearchNonNull(Entry n, Object value) {
    if (value.equals(n.value)) return true;
    return (n.left != null && valueSearchNonNull(n.left,value))
          || (n.right != null && valueSearchNonNull(n.right,value));
}
```
Trees + Null-object + visitor = CS2 OO Overkill

- **A Node is either**
  - Empty or Internal
  - Leaf (not shown here, but is in code online/handout)

- **Empty Node**
  - Singleton
  - Response to `getLeft()`
    - Exception
    - No-op

- **Visitor**
  - Encapsulate new operations over structures
  - Structure built from static set of types (e.g., nodes)
Trees + Null-object + visitor = CS2 OO Overkill

- **Visitor simulates double-dispatch**
  - Polymorphism on operation and element

- **Distributed recursion**
  - Control not centralized
  - Demonstrably difficult for students

- **Writing copy/clone is trivial with plain-old data, harder with visitor**
  - Is difficulty relevant?
  - Why do we study trees?
public class InternalNode extends Node {
    public Object accept(Visitor v, Object o) {
        v.visitInternal(this, o);
    }
}

public class SizeVisitor extends Visitor {
    public Object visitInternal(InternalNode node, Object o) {
        Integer lcount = (Integer) node.getLeft().accept(this, o);
        Integer rcount = (Integer) node.getRight().accept(this, o);
        return new Integer(1 + lcount.intValue() + rcount.intValue());
    }
    public Object visitEmpty(EmptyNode node, Object o) {
        return ourZero;
    }
    private static Integer ourZero = new Integer(0);
}
System.out.println("# nodes = "+
    root.accept(SizeVisitor.getInstance(), null));
Hangman: two case studies of OO in FYI

- Contrasting goals and methodologies of Hangman