

An SST Blog

Computer Programming and the Game of Thrones

A great story may be a poor reason to make someone a king, but there is no avoiding the fact that stories are how we learn.



A GOOD STORY

When the *Game of Thrones* HBO series came screeching to a halt a few weeks ago, one of the final scenes included a speech by Tyrion Lannister in which he said, among other things, that dour and humorless Bran Stark should become King because he had "a great story." I saw several reviews that mocked the writing and observation, belittling the idea that stories were somehow of fundamental importance to the people of Westeros or anywhere else. I don't know that "they have a great story" is a good reason to make someone a King or Queen, but Tyrion did have a good point: stories are truly how we communicate, person to person and generation to generation. Face-to-face story-telling is definitely how we learn, how we've always learned, and how we learn best.

IF ONLY THERE WERE A BETTER WAY

As much as we all wish that there were some magical way to learn without human interaction, we have known for close to 200 years that the most effective way to teach and learn remains the student-teacher archetype. If you look through educational literature dating from the invention of daguerreotype (photos) in 1826, you'll find scholarly papers, articles, advertisements and claims that the new technology, whatever it was, would change everything. This was said of daguerreotype, the phonograph, wireless, the cathode ray tube, moving pictures, filmstrips, slide projectors, overhead projectors, video, computers, and the WWW. And while these developments were all somewhat helpful, none has in fact made much of a difference. The problem is that no matter how wonderful your packaged, stand-alone, automated teaching may be, it fails more than it succeeds because there is no instructor to engage the student, answer questions and help the student get unstruck.

TECHNOLOGY IS THE PROBLEM. AND THE SOLUTION.

Ironically, that is exactly where technology has come to the rescue. Modern remote live or virtual classroom instruction has had a profound effect on slashing the cost of instruction that involves an actual instructor, and self-paced, on-demand training took us to the next step in training economy, but left the student who had a question or problem alone in the dark. [Software Skills Training](#) has solved this problem, providing a dedicated instructor not only to students who are in the classroom or virtual classroom, but to those who take courses via streaming video, on their own, at their own pace. Have a problem? Fire off an email to your own assigned instructor/mentor who is responsible for your success. It's the best of all worlds -- the natural human interaction of the classroom, the student-teacher experience, and, if you choose, the convenience of self-paced training; the ability to move at you own pace in your own time, at work or at home.

A GREAT STORY

That's our story, and we're sticking to it: people learn best face-to-face, as they always have. The least we can do is offer a face to all our students -- including those who are using on-demand training -- to answer questions. A great story with a real human may be a crappy reason to make someone a King, but it's the best way to learn about computer technology.

Best Regards,

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