

## Re: student question/ array

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**Date:** 04/10/04

Date: Sat, 10 Apr 2004 12:01:50 -0500

"Troy Scott mindspring.com>"

> *Jim, maybe I didn't make myself clear.*

Regardless of the problem, it will be better for all involved if you ask your questions to your instructor.

Anyone you meet here will most likely not know what you have been taught so far. So if they provide an answer that uses something that has not been discussed in class, then the instructor will know that you either did not do the work yourself, or you already know the material and should be getting 100% on all the quizzes. For example, Jim suggested he would use a database, probably not something you've covered yet. I would think UDT's would work, but again, we can't know what you know, or don't know.

One part of programming is learning the language that you use to talk to the computer, another part is getting the computer to do something you already know how to do. There are things to learn in both those areas. So, when someone gives you an answer to your question, you don't get the benefit of figuring out how to tell the computer to do what you want. You learn how somebody else gets the computer to do what is required. But at this point in your studies, learning how to put your thoughts into the language of the computer may very well be part of the exercise.

If you go to your instructor, the s/he will know you are having trouble and can find out if your trouble lies with understanding the problem, or with translating what you know to the computer's language. If you do not understand the question, if for example you could not do nearly the same thing with pen and paper, then the instructor should help you decipher what the question is.

But if you understand the question, and could solve the problem yourself, but can't quite get the computer to do it, then the instructor may step back and let you wrestle with that a little while.

That is a skill that has to be developed, and you develop it by exercising it. If you go out to lift weights, you get no benefits if there are people there lifting the weights for you, you have to do the work to gain the benefit.

Also, if you, and several others are having trouble and the instructor finds several from the class coming up with the same problem, then s/he knows that subject needs to be better covered in class.

As you see, it really is better for the student to talk with their instructor, and not get too much outside help. That being said, many will help when you post the code you are working on, that fails in some small way. When you have most of the work done already, and just need a little nudge to get it to work right, then providing a change to get it to work will be more educational to you. It will be your design, and the small change made will help you to see what was lacking in your design.

The posting you posted recently is more on the order of 'how do I do it' but that is the area that you need to develop. You have take what you could do yourself (with a pen and paper) and translate that into a design that can be programmed into the computer. If you fail to learn how to deal with that part of it now, you may continue to struggle with it later, so it is generally best just to let you work out your own design.

Just like talking, you first have to speak the words, and then have to learn how to connect the words into sentences to convey your own thoughts. That is something you have to learn, no one can learn it for you, even if your parent are doing all while you learn to speak. It is much the same way here. You have to learn how to translate your ideas into a design that can be applied using the tools you have. They are ideas in your head, you have to learn how to get them out into the real world. The way you do that is by practice, practice, practice. You have to try something, and when you learn that works, you move on, if it doesn't work you find out why and try something else, etc. It really is a lot like learning a foreign language, things don't come out perfect when you are just begining to learn, but they continue to get better the more you continue to work at it.

LFS