Symposium: Cognitive Science Education

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Abstract

As is well known, teaching cognitive science presents some special challenges, whether to undergraduates or to graduate students. In this symposium, we aim to explore some of the problems that teaching cognitive science presents in the class- or seminar room and identify some of the special opportunities.

Andrew Brook

Andrew Brook will focus on identifying some of the problems that we are faced with when we set out to teach cognitive science to undergraduates and make new cognitive scientists out of graduate students. One notable problem is that even the meaning of key terms varies across the cognitive disciplines, `representation', `goal' and `action' being three important examples.

Janet Kolodner

Janet Kolodner will take off from her widely-discussed report on the Cognitive Science Education Day, 1994, in Atlanta. She will follow up on some of the issues and ideas raised at that meeting.

Paul Thagard

Paul Thagard will identify some of the problems that arise for interdisciplinary education in cognitive science, and discuss some solutions based on unifying themes such as the computational-representational understanding of mind.

Michael Ranney

Michael Ranney will discuss the challenges of (a) bringing coherence to what, when implemented poorly, can strike students as just "disciplines on parade,"and (b) balancing the hyperbole of striking new aspects of cognitive science with the sometimes glacial pace of fundamental progress on even primitive notions (e.g., what "similarity" is).

Seán Ó Nualláin

There has been a huge growth in work on cognition and computation in Ireland recently, both in universities and in the private sector. Dublin City University has been at the forefront of a lot of this work. Seán Ó Nualláin will bring us up to date on what has been happening.

Discussion

One of the most interesting and successful features of the Cognitive Science Education Day in Atlanta in 1994 was the rich and wide-ranging discussion that followed the formal presentations. It is our intention to keep the formal presentations brief, using them to identity and introduce issues rather than to treat them thoroughly, and to leave as much time as possible for dialogue to take root and grow again in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1998!