

Curriculum developer

Bryce had always enjoyed teaching, especially technology subjects like computer science, business information systems, and business math. When he completed his MBA, he didn't think his first project was to be a **curriculum developer for computer programming classes**. He was pleased to accept a consulting contract with the San Francisco Unified School District to do just that.

Detailed information

San Francisco Unified ran an innovative, grant-funded high school named "The School for Business and Commerce." This school accepted high school students from every part of the city and provided all types of practical business training courses, including word processing and office machine operations, accounting and finance, fashion merchandising, banking, and retail operations. The school's goal was to provide students with the contemporary skills they would need to find jobs need upon graduation. (The coincidence here is that Bryce's mother had graduated from San Francisco's "Commerce High School" nearly 40 years earlier.)

The school did not have business computer programming classes, despite the fact that they had invested more than \$100,000 dollars (in 1979 dollars no less) in a DEC PDP-11 minicomputer system – the same type of computer Bryce had programmed at SFSU.

Some math teachers from the neighboring high school had been assigned the job of teaching programming courses. The only programming language they knew was BASIC, a fine language for teaching, but not the language of choice for writing business applications. The school had just started offering classes in BASIC. The students developed some rudimentary computer games and spent time hacking to see how many times they could crash the system.

Bryce's assignment was to develop and implement business programming classes. He chose the predominant business programming language of the day: COBOL. He created beginning, intermediate, and advanced COBOL classes, as well as a systems design course.

Implementation proved to be a bit tricky because the math teachers resisted learning a new programming language they really didn't want to teach! Bryce carefully broke down this barrier and finished training the teachers. The courses proved to be popular with the students, and they dove in and became talented business programmers with basic systems analysis skills.

The school extended Bryce's contract and assigned him the task of starting a business outreach program to try to get internships and paid jobs for the graduates – one of the goals for all classes at that school. These efforts were reported in a nice article in ComputerWorld, the leading publication of the industry.

When Bryce wrapped up this contract, he immediately started working at Qantel, where he stayed for the next 11 years.