Scientific Olympiads & Competitions

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- Chairman of the 27th International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI)
- International Zhautykov Olympiad, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- International Olympiad of Metropolices, Moscow, Russia
Presentation outline

• What are Scientific Olympiads?
• What is a teaching excellence?
• Who are the best students we would like to see and work with?
• How personal achievements in Olympiads correlates among different competitions and with research impact?
What are Scientific Olympiads

• (narrow view) Educational events for secondary school students
  Good for students?
  Demonstrates a Country level in education?
  Jury members have a time to prepare problem sets instead of working on their research

• (Wide view) A science itself
Scientific competitions are origin of modern Science?

• http://www.storyofmathematics.com/16th_tartaglia.html

In the Renaissance Italy of the early 16th Century, Bologna University in particular was famed for its intense public mathematics competitions. It was in just such a competition, in 1535, that the unlikely figure of the young Venetian Tartaglia first revealed a mathematical finding hitherto considered impossible, and which had stumped the best mathematicians of China, India and the Islamic world.

• Scientific research is a Competition?
Expectations & Benefits

• (Secondary school students) **Enter University**
Does it works for US Universities?
University of Waterloo, Canada:
Michael & Ophelia Lazaridis Olympiad Scholarship

• (University students) **Get <Google> job offer**
Actually works with Google and others

• (Professors) **Homeworks/Exams preparation**
There are a lot of automated online judge systems to study programming
Negative feedback

• Olympiads produce narrow minded / ... students
• Wish to be first – it’s a sin?
  Ready to cheat to get gold medal
  Do not enter contest having low chance to win
• Students are preparing for Google interview instead of study
• We have to teach not only best/self-motivated students
• What is a fun solving a task which is known to be solvable?
Objective reasoning

- V.I. Arnold: «Как вам удалось при столь низком школьном образовании достичь столь высокого уровня в науке?»
- Olympiads produce excellent tasks/problems – like Arnold’s Mathematical trivium
- Known things should be done in reasonable time – otherwise a lifetime is not enough to solve a complex problem
- The only way to learn programming is to write programs with (online) judge
- The best ways to learn the art of fast and correct programming are various programming contests
## Olympiads & Competitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary schools</th>
<th>High schools / Universities</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>International Olympiads, UNESCO</td>
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<td>IOI, Informatics (since 1989) <a href="http://ioinformatics.org">http://ioinformatics.org</a></td>
<td>ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest <a href="https://icpc.baylor.edu/">https://icpc.baylor.edu/</a></td>
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**Kaggle** is a platform for predictive modelling and analytics competitions in which companies and researchers post data and statisticians and data miners compete to produce the best models for predicting and describing the data. (crowdsourcing approach)
What is a teaching excellence?

• Inspire students to learn - do not kill student’s dream
• Student needs challenge - the challenge comes from modern science and industry
• Your students are ready to work in top level high-tech companies
• Achievements of your student are higher than yours. Isaac Newton: “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”
What is a teaching excellence?

- Triple R: Read → Remember → Repeat

- Triple L: Listen → Learn → Lead

- The Arabic word QURAN means Read, Remember & Repeat?
Who are the best students we would like to see and work with?

• School/University level competition winners are not always best students / researchers
• It is hard to teach and work with students who knows subject “better” than teacher
• It is hard to give to winners challenging tasks
How personal achievements in Olympiads correlates among different competitions and with research impact?

• IOI vs. ACM ICPC
  Good correlation – good problem for detailed analysis
  Winners of IOI (secondary school) not always are winners of ACM ICPC – the level of tasks and contest are different

• Grisha Perelman
  IMO’82 Absolute winner
  Poincaré conjecture
This is first IOI in my memory when we get presents at arrival day – roses in our hands are valuable demonstration of hospitality and heart of Persia!

Yuta Takaya, Japan – absolute winner of both IMO’17 and IOI’17
## 2017 ACM-ICPC World Finals, sponsored by IBM

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