

for learning efficiently, he also provides him with an up-to-date background on the state of the art so that, indeed, there would be little, if any, need to seek other supplementary material.

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**35[12].**—MARIO V. FARINA, *Programming in BASIC*, Prentiss-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1968, ix + 164 pp., 28 cm.

BASIC is the name of a programming language used on teletype consoles by students at Dartmouth College in time-sharing communication with the GE-265 and GE-645 computers. It does not have the flexibility of Fortran IV which it resembles in many ways, but what it lacks in repertoire it more than makes up for in terms of usefulness.

This text is an attempt to illustrate the BASIC language and it is to the credit of the author that he accomplishes his task magnificently. The book assumes no previous knowledge of either time-sharing features or programming know-how and, without realizing it, the reader is introduced to the language with ease and clear understanding.

On a recent visit to Dartmouth, I was told that it takes a student about two hours to learn BASIC. This may be somewhat of an exaggeration or may apply only to those specially gifted students we are used to seeing around computers nowadays. However, it takes only about two hours to get through Mr. Farina's book and it has the added advantage that if one has to learn BASIC one can enjoy it at the same time.

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**36[12].**—MARIO V. FARINA, *COBOL Simplified*, Prentiss-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1968, xii + 528 pp., 28 cm.

Once again Mario Farina has shown that all it takes to write a clear, meaningful and substantial textbook on a computer language, is a thorough understanding of the subject matter, a penchant for short, precise statements, a sensitive pedagogic technique plus a desire to patiently present the subject matter in a logical order and in a manner designed to inform the reader in the most palatable way possible.

COBOL *Simplified*, despite its 528 easy-to-read pages, is an excellent contribution to the literature. It will not appeal to the COBOL expert or to one who is searching for all manner of novel or exotic techniques. Instead, it is ideally suited for the serious beginning student and very little by way of prerequisites is expected of him.

The structure of the COBOL language is carefully explained in the course of the 60 lessons each of which is accompanied by clear, appropriate sketches and program segments followed by review questions to which full answers are found in the rear of the book.

This text might not be a literary masterpiece but it most certainly accomplishes its stated goal, i.e. to teach those who need to learn the language quickly. I think this would make an excellent choice for any student of business. It is probably suitable for a semester's course in college although it may be used to great advantage as a self-instructional text.

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**37[12].**—BRYAN HIGMAN, *A Comparative Study of Programming Languages*, American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1967, iii + 164 pp., 22 cm. Price \$8.50.

There is an essential need for comparative studies of programming languages. Unfortunately, this book does not contribute much to filling the void. It is a little book which gives an unbalanced and much too superficial view of programming languages. It is not suitable as a textbook but might be useful to someone with a knowledge of, say, Fortran who wants a feel for other programming languages with a decided "European" view. About a third of the book attempts to lay the formal groundwork for the comparative study of languages; this is however later ignored and instead a philosophical view is presented. The introduction to the basics of programming linguistics is good.

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**38[12].**—WILLIAM F. SHARP, *Basic*, The Free Press, New York, 1967, xi + 137 pp., 26 cm. Price \$6.75 Hardbound, \$3.95 Paperbound.

As an introduction to Computer Programming, using the BASIC language should prove to be most successful with students of both scientific or business orientation. It is clear, precise, amply illustrated and written in a style which is both interesting and engaging.

The first seventy-two pages are devoted to the various instructions and procedures, questions being asked along the way and their answers supplied in full. Once the fundamentals have been learned the student is told (page 71)—"you now know something about computers. You know they are *not* giant electronic brains, but they can be programmed to do rather clever things; and you have a fair notion of the manner in which this is done."