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Hello, my name is Terry Patterson, and I want to welcome you today to my presentation about AI Coding and Me: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Programming in Blackboard.

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We've got a lot of things to tell, and I've got a hopefully a very interesting story for you today that hopefully at the end, well, you will find benefits you as a Blackboard administrator. So let's get into this. Before we get started on the story, a little bit about me. My name's Terry. I'm the Director of Learning Technologies at the University of St. Thomas here in Space City, Houston, Texas.

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I am the author of the Blackboard Learn Administration book and a Blackboard Community Leadership Circle member. My personal life, I've got my cat Luna there, and I enjoy photography, travel, and genealogy research. Research, uh, when it comes to my family. So, uh, it's a great time for, uh, us to talk about some very interesting things. It's a great and interesting time in our world when it comes to utilizing technologies.

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And so let's start by just doing a basic thing here. These are 6 people. Some you may know, uh, right off the bat. Some of them you may not.

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Uh, look at these people, and, uh, these are all people who work in the tech industry.

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I want to pause here, and I want you to think and try to figure out which one of these— each of these different numbered folks So let's look at this. Number 1, most of you may see Steve Jobs. That's him in high school. Number 2 is Steve Wozniak. Number 3, that's Bill Gates.

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Number 4 is Eric Schmidt from Google. Number 5 is Steve Ballmer from Microsoft. And number 6 is Jeff Bezos from Amazon. Each of these people started out as high schoolers in these pictures. They were out to solve problems in their lives, whether that was they needed a job, whether they wanted to make impacts to the greater good of the world or anything.

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But they were looking to solve problems and they were able to solve those. By utilizing programming, but they weren't programmers. None of these— maybe Bill, maybe Steve, uh, Steve Wozniak, maybe, uh, Steve Jobs. Both of those, yeah, those you might call those programmers. But in the end, what they were doing is trying to solve a problem that was right there in front of them.

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And everyone in this room is trying to solve a problem every single day, no matter if it is just, uh, you know, enrolling students into a course or having a more larger conversation about how to manage, uh, university course systems and tools. All of these things are, uh, are— we all have these same common problems and we all are looking for solutions. So What I want to do today is break down and shatter this programmer stereotype that many of us have. You know, when you think about movies from the '80s like Revenge of the Nerds or any of those type of movies, you think about the pocket protectors, the taped glasses, the rulers. If you think back to any major sitcom from the '80s, you thought about that type of mentality when it came to nerds.

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Uh, really, we started seeing that that wasn't the mentality, uh, as we started and our society started changing. And as we got into the 2000s and 2010s and 2020s, you know, we had shows like Big Bang Theory that changed how we, uh, we viewed and how we conceptually visualized as a society the people of programmers and engineers and those kind of things. So we really changed our minds. And really, in and of itself, we all are programmers today because we all can use automation to create

things that solve our problems for our day-to-day basis, whether it's scheduling emails and texts to go out at times so we can be efficient on our downtime, whether it's working at 2 AM or 3 AM or working while I'm on a flight or while I'm en route somewhere. I can work to automate my flight booking.

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I can have the system look and find the cheapest flights for me if I'm going on a trip or I'm taking a vacation. There are even technologies that'll do web scraping and data collection to tell you when prices change for something you may be looking at, whether it be on Amazon or another e-commerce site. So all of these tools are out there working in our day-to-day. The central question that we need to think about is why can't we take these same types of automation skills and the same type of abilities that we use in our day-to-day and apply them to our jobs as LMS administrators and developers? So with that in mind, I was at Anthology Together last year.

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And Kevin Squire, shout out to him, gave a presentation about him and how he's utilizing PHP scripts and the REST APIs within Blackboard to save him time. And so he brought the attention to me this book by Limoncelli. Called Time Management for System Administrators from O'Reilly. And it's been out for quite a while, but it does an amazingly good job of giving information and giving you basic skills on how to make and improve your time and effort in your time management. So I started looking and started saying, this is the year for me to work to better manage my time.

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I had just recently taken this position as the Director of Learning Technologies. I had moved into this position and I said to myself, automation is something I need to do for my benefit and also for my management to build my skills of how can I better manage my time, how can I better manage my skills to be able to utilize technology and programming.

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So when I did that, I started thinking about how am I really a programmer? And in and of itself, we're all programmers because we all can follow directions. If you can't follow directions, I don't think any of you would be here today.

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And I use the most simple thoughts of GPS. GPS is now ubiquitous for all of us. Most of us didn't get to where we are today, literally without GPS. We use Google Maps, Apple Maps, Bing, uh, you know, there are a variety of different, uh, options, whether it's the GPS system that sits in your car, the one on your phone, or maybe a device that you carry around when you go hiking or camping. You have some type of way that you're using these GPS satellites surrounding our Earth to be able to tell you where you are in position to other things on, on our planet.

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So when you put in an address, the system creates a set of directions, and those directions are a set of logic that tells you go through X point to from point A to point B, take the input here and get to this output. In and of itself, the directions that you're having and those logical steps is programming because programming is just logic. Programming is just saying, do this. And after that process, do this. And then after that process, do this.

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And then if this happens, you either do here, you know, you take option A or option B. You're not writing it in C#, you're not writing it in Python, but the logical skills that you use every single day when you are a Google— when you're using Google Maps or when you're moving around or driving, those same logical skills to follow those directions and develop those directions to go from point A to point B are exactly The same ones that you will need to create logical steps so that AI can write scripting and automation processes for you. So we're going to talk more about my journey through that in the next lesson.