



Facilitating Role

Switches Smoothly

3/14/23

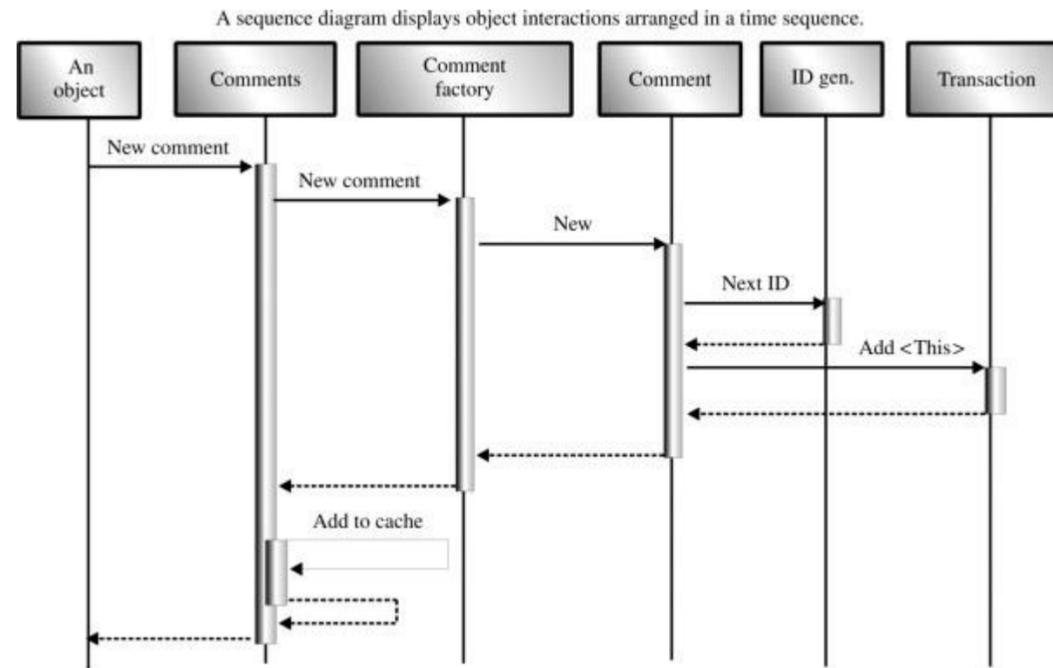
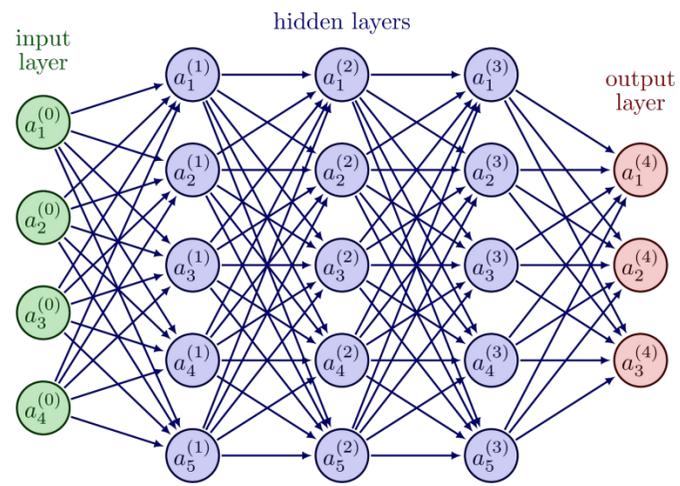
Agenda

- Background
- Who are they?
- What do they need?
- Pitfalls
- Kudos



Background

Background





Who are they?

Who are they?

- Example: ML engineer → backend SWE
- New people, role, responsibilities
- Will be slower, less effective
- Taking risk to further career





What do they need?

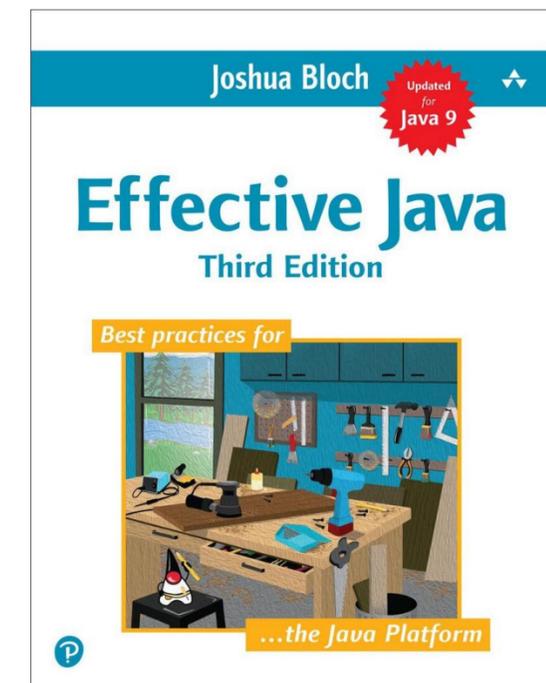
What do they need?

- Ability to learn
 - Learning environment
 - Guidance from experienced folks
 - Don't know what they don't know!
- Ability to feel good about their work
 - Safe space
 - Positive reinforcement



Tricks of the trade: learning

- Provide resources ahead of switch to hit ground running
 - On my team: Head First Java, Effective Java, internal service container docs, Guice docs, etc.
- Onboarding doc
 - Onboarding buddy, main project(s), team overview, etc.
- Learning environment
 - Team study hall
- Guidance from experienced folks
 - Benefit from regular unblocking
 - Resource guidance as topics come up
 - Pairing!



Tricks of the trade: feeling good

- Safe space
 - No judgment → PR reviews, verbal feedback, etc.
- Positive reinforcement
 - Proactively combat impostor syndrome

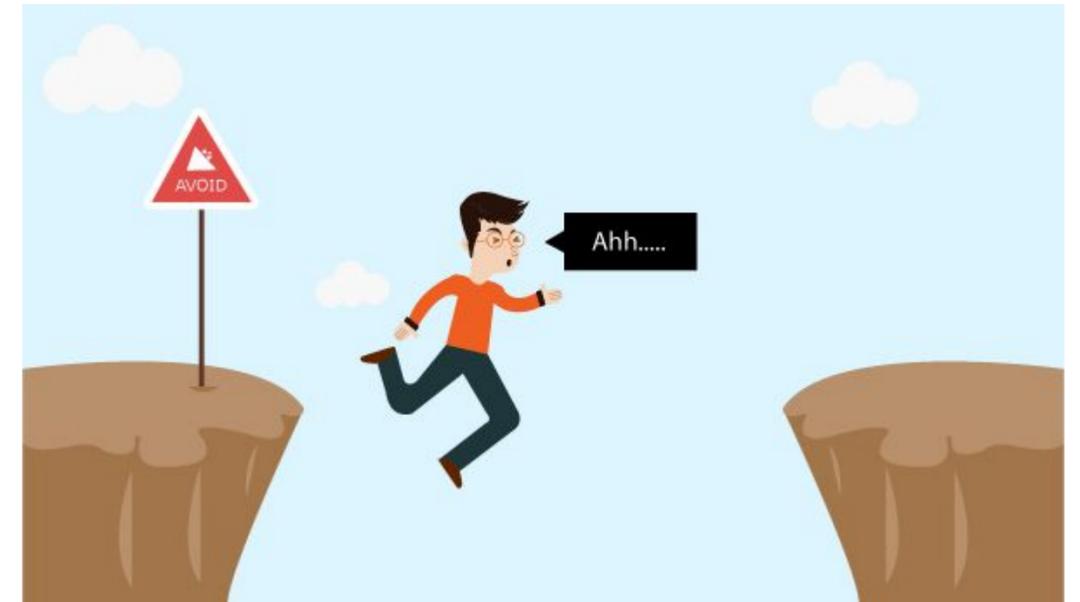




Pitfalls

Pitfalls

1. Insufficient guidance
 - a. Many things are obvious to you, not to newcomer
 - b. Err on side of excessive explanation
2. Insufficient check-in frequency
 - a. Blocked time = wasted time
 - b. Avoid false starts
3. Explanations that won't make sense to newcomers
 - a. "Just use a database transaction"
 - b. "In this case, we want to guard against one update succeeding and others failing. We can do that by..."





Kudos

Kudos, Follow-Up

- Kudos to Square for
 - Prioritizing internal mobility
 - Enabling me to give this talk
 - Providing early feedback on its content
- Feel free to find me after if you have questions!
- Email: bclayman@squareup.com