

CS 321 Human-Computer Interaction

Small Group Discussions: Reading & Discussion Questions

Notes to Instructor:

I try to use a variety of teaching modalities in my course. One of these is small group discussions. There are a number of topics in HCI that tend to be best taught through personal discussion and relating personal experiences. The small group discussion provides an opportunity for students to learn from one another and for students to learn through explaining their own understanding to others.

The small group activity also provides an excellent venue for giving the students an opportunity to practice some type of group process. I mirror the group process that they are expected to use in their project groups (See Contextual Design, Beyer & Holtzblatt). Many of the students in our course have no experience working in a group or may not have had one in which a process was provided. Giving them a process enhances their productivity and experience. The result we gathered while studying our curriculum revealed that many of the students came into the course with high apprehension of working in a group, fearing that it was going to be difficult, but the exit survey results indicate that the group work was a high positive experience.

To prepare them for the discussions I hand out reading questions a week prior to the small group discussion days. See the instructions on the first set of reading questions for details.