Lab 00: Where do you know computers from?

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# Background

This exercise asks you to question the assumption that “everyone knows this.” When you are struggling the fear is that “everyone *but me* knows this,” so you keep your questions to yourself. When you’ve already learned a topic, then you might assume “everyone knows this” and miss the opportunity to help a peer. I am asking you to assume that “not everyone knows this” and work from there.

This activity is heavily influence by and would not have been possible without the activity “’Where do you know from?’: An exercise in placing ourselves together in the classroom” (Zuroski, 2020).

### Note about your submission

The submission is only an artifact of your engagement with the material and not the product of your efforts. What is the difference? The product of your efforts is the learning of the material and application of the module’s skills. Labs are meant to be relatively low-stakes, formative assessments to allow you to develop skills and apply concepts. You are graded on the accuracy and completeness of your answers (see the rubric for more details), but if you focus just on the score and do not engage in discussion, then you are not going to get the most out of the activity.

## Activity Instructions

Our exposure to technology is hard to separate from our personal backgrounds. Questions about who we are, where we come from, and what opportunities we may or may not have had can often leave us feeling vulnerable. The goal of this exercise is not to out anyone as a computer expert or a computer novice, instead it is intended to us to create a common understanding of where we are as a group before we explore the topics of this course.

In the first part of the activity, you will form small groups. Please keep in mind Dr. Eugenia Zuroski’s original guidance that “*these questions are meant only as prompts to help you craft an introduction. This is not a test, and you are not obligated to answer all questions, or any questions in particular. I ask only that you consider what you want to tell others in the room, and not prioritize what you think others want or expect from you”* (Zuroski, 2020)*.*

(Dr. Zuroski is a professor at a Canadian university, so “prioritize” and “recognise” are spelled correctly.)

### **Guiding Questions**

These questions do not have a place for you to write answers because these are prompts to guide your introductions to each other. The following section of questions will have room for recording your responses.

1. ***What is your name?*** *What would you like us to call you?* (Zuroski, 2020)
2. ***Which pronouns would you like us to use in reference to you?****For some people, the question of pronouns is a recurring one; others may be unaccustomed to thinking about it with regard to themselves. Either way, I encourage everyone to sit with this question, and to answer however you wish, which may be not at all.* (Zuroski, 2020)
3. **What are your computer, technology, or information interests?** What brought you to InfoSci? What topics have you found particularly captivating? What topics do you want to know more about? What do you think you should have learned here, but have not?
4. **How were you introduced to computing?** Who was your biggest computing influence or inspiration?
5. **Why are you learning about computing?** What do you want to do with these skills?
6. ***What else would you like us to remember and recognise about you when we engage in conversation with you?*** *Is there anything you haven’t yet mentioned, or that you have but would like to emphasize, that you would like people to recognise in or about you when they engage you and your ideas in conversation?* (Zuroski, 2020)

### **Questions For Reporting Back**

Please fill in these questions with the responses that you came up with as a team or that we discussed as a class.

1. **How were your team’s responses similar?**

We are all Info Sci majors with backgrounds and interests in technology, we were introduced to computers by the influence of our parents

1. **How were your team’s responses different?**

We have different career interests and reasons as to why we ended up in Info Sci. We have different amounts of experience building and working with computer systems. Not all of us play **StarCraft**

1. **What impact do you think the similarities or differences in background will impact your team’s learning in this class?**

We all have different backgrounds and different career / education goals. Bringing these differences into the discussion really helped us improve our decision making and our perspective on diversity!

1. **What is one thing that you think the class should remember from this discussion?**

When you have a dream, you’ve got to grab it and never let go

Nothing is impossible. The word itself says ‘I’m possible!

There is nothing impossible for those who will try.

The bad news is time flies. The good news is you’re the pilot

Life has got all those twists and turns. You’ve got to hold on tight and off you go

Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you

You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take

Diversity breeds new ideas

Be courageous. Challenge orthodoxy. Stand up for what you believe in. When you are in your rocking chair talking to your grandchildren many years from now, be sure you have a good story to tell

## Citations

Zuroski, E. (2020, January 27). “Where Do You Know From?”: An Exercise in Placing Ourselves Together in the Classroom. *MAI: Feminism & Visual Culture*. https://maifeminism.com/where-do-you-know-from-an-exercise-in-placing-ourselves-together-in-the-classroom/