

# In-Class Exercises and Discussion

COMP 40

September 7, 2011

## Introduction

Classroom exercises serve two purposes:

- To give you a break from continuous lecturing
- To give you a chance to discuss and engage with problems in small groups

An ideal classroom exercise will give you a boost in completing homework.

## Small-group work

1. *Divide into groups of four or five students.* We will try to form groups that are diverse, so that each group contains people with different kinds or degrees of experience and people who live in different places.
2. *Once the groups have been formed, please introduce yourselves to each other, and write your names on the exercise sheet.*
3. *Choose a keeper of the records.* The keeper of the records *makes sure the group's ideas get written down.* The keeper need not do all the writing himself or herself.
  - The record-keeper makes sure all voices are heard in discussion.
  - Even when there is no consensus, the record-keeper makes sure a summary of each person's views, ideas, or solutions is written on the exercise sheet.

Everyone will have the opportunity to serve as a record-keeper during the term.

4. *Discuss possible approaches to the problem.* This is a “brainstorming” phase. Don't stop with a single solution; *identify as many reasonable solutions as you can think of.* You may want scrap paper.
5. *Reach consensus on the most promising ideas.* Perhaps the group will agree on one approach that is the most promising. Perhaps there will be significant dissent—maybe even no majority view. To reach consensus, you may need to explore ideas.
6. *Write down your conclusions.* The written record should cover the following points:
  - Any preferred answer or solution reached by consensus of your group.
  - Views of all group members, including minority views.
  - Brief record of any approaches or solutions that your group considered but ultimately rejected.

The course staff will copy the master sheet for every member of the group.

## Correlation and Feedback

1. Your written conclusions will go to the course staff, who will respond as appropriate at the next class meeting.
2. In some classes, we may make take time to allow *record-keepers from individual groups present their groups' conclusions.* We'll write down these conclusions on the board.