

Contextual Inquiry Guide for TAs

Interviewee:
Title:
Role:
Institution:
Interviewers:
Place:
Date & Time:

Getting Started

Introduce the team and give an overview of why you're there.

Have the participant sign the consent form.

Be sure to make notes about the user's context throughout the CI.

Have fun!

Gather demographic & background info / Ice breakers

Demographics & Characteristics

- Where are you in your studies? What's your major?
- What class do you TA?
- Can you tell us about the class you TA? how many students, do you have sections, TAs?
- Do you use an on-line system to help manage your course material? What is it? How long have you been using it? Have you used any others?
- What do you normally use a computer for?
- Any favorite applications or websites? Why?
- Any you don't like?

Interview Portion of CI

The goal is to gain a general understanding of the kind of activities the user does to get their work done. It's important to note the user's primary (most critical, most often, etc.) activities. You'll want to ask them to show you how they complete these activities during the transition portion of the CI. You are looking for "hooks" between the user's work and your focus.

Global Questions (start off asking a few of these questions)

- Tell me about a typical day (include activities around TA work).
- Can you tell us a little bit about in the course?
- Opportunity: What activities currently waste your time?
- Goals: What makes a good day? A bad day?
- If you could change anything about your job as a TA, what would it be?
- Priorities: What is most important to you?
- Information: What helps you make decisions?

General Questions About Sakai/Moodle/uPortal

- Function: What are the most common things you do with the product?
- Frequency: What parts of the product do you use most?
- Preference: What are your favorite aspects of the product? What drives you crazy?
- Failure: How do you work around problems?
- Expertise: What shortcuts do you employ?
- What goals do users have which the product help them work towards? What basic tasks does the product support in order to help users accomplish these goals?
- What frustrations do users have with managing content in general? What frustrations do they have with this within uPortal, Sakai, Moodle and/or other similar products?

Activities

- Are you involved with getting the course site set up? If so, can you tell us about what that process is like?
- How do you get content into the course site?

- How is the course site organized?
- What kinds of activities do you do in your course site?
- How do you get content into your course site?
- Do you use the wiki? Why or why not? Can you show us how you use it?
- How do you use a syllabus in setting up your course?
- Resources/File Management
 - How would you describe the Resources tool to someone who has never used it?
 - What do you like/not like about the Resources Tool? File Management systems in general?

Transition to observation mode

Once you've gathered enough background and general information shift from traditional interview mode to CI mode. This is where you ask the user to perform some of the tasks you learned about earlier. Let the user know you may interrupt with questions but mostly you'll be observing at this point.

Use what you learned in the interview portion to ask the user to show you particular activities. Below are some areas of interest for our content management research. Use these categories as guides to remind you of important areas of their work you may want to see and or discuss. The questions are meant to be guides rather than a script. You can use them if you get stuck around a particular area.

Types of Content

- What's your course material like?
- What content do you keep in your course site?
- Is there material you don't keep in the site? Why?
- What kind of content do you have in your courses? (LMSs)
- What type of content is contained in your portal? (uPortal)
- What frustrates you most about managing, presenting and or sharing course material?

Share and Reuse Content

- Do you share content with other TAs and across sections?
- Anyone else you share content with?
- Do you ever reuse your course material in different courses or contexts? What about across semesters? Can you tell us about a specific situation?

Publicize Content

- How does the way you organize & present your content help you teach?
- How do you publish content in Sakai/uPortal/Moodle?
- Who else publishes content to the course site? What kind? Under what circumstances?
- How do you let students know when content has changed/what's new?

Organize Content

- How do you organize your site/content? (OK to mention outside systems)
- What information is important for you to know about your content? (e.g. metadata like modified date)

Create/Design/ Collaborate on Content

- Who creates course material?
- How?
- What role do others play in content creation? Is there collaboration? What does that look like?
- When do you work on content with others/collaborate?
- How do you track who's working on a file when changes are made?

Communication (w/Students)

- How do you communicate with students?
- Announcements
- Emails
- Grades
- Class cancellation/changes
- How do you/your students use (content creation) tools to participate in class or interact with other students?

Other questions you may want to include:

1. Whether users need to work in multiple sites at once (and if so, why)
2. How users currently navigate to/switch between their sites
3. Whether users understand the concept of, and use, browser tabs
4. Whether users need to "save state", and if so, why?
5. How do users search for/become members in new sites?

Wrap-up

Thank them for their time.

Ask if they can suggest a TA, student or another faculty to talk to.

Ask if it would be OK to contact them with follow-up questions and/or design review as we move through the project.

Back at the office... check off participant on [Users to research profile matrix](#) as you talk to people with each characteristic



All User Guides

- [Contextual Inquiry Guide for Instructors](#)
- [Contextual Inquiry Guide for Students](#)