Being part of a research institution, my teaching philosophy encompasses more than endowing students with knowledge and capabilities to achieve their academic and professional goals. As a PhD student at Cornell University I have mentored individual students and group projects in the HCI lab, served as a teaching assistant, and co-taught human-computer interaction classes. In all these situations, both in the classroom and in the HCI lab, I attempt to combine learning with research for the exploration and generation of original knowledge by my students. Below I specify the techniques I apply to achieve my teaching goals.

In the Classroom

My classroom teaching approach is comprised of the following key elements: analytical thinking, learning by doing, and teamwork. I apply these elements similarly in a small seminar or a larger lecture course.

The first element of my teaching approach is encouraging students to process course content critically and analytically. I do this by providing content and asking questions that guide discussions in the classroom and in small groups. This allows learning to happen interactively where students learn to express their ideas as well as listen to the speaker. I expect students to evaluate evidence and ideas across any area of content being considered in the class and to articulate their thoughts both orally and in writing. I believe that in this way students can achieve deep understanding of the materials.

Second, I am an advocate of "learning by doing". Especially when it comes to human-computer interaction, there is no substitute to students actually designing and building working prototypes or executing a real user study and experiencing first-hand the unexpected challenges that real world provides. Theoretical study alone is insufficient for making designs that respond to actual user needs. Further, when reporting on their work, I expect students to write papers that adhere to scientific writing in content, structure, and style. Students are expected to justify their ideas and empirical work by referring to related work. This prepares students who are interested in an academic career to write papers that are suitable for academic publication.

Third, in my view, students learn best when interacting with each other in teams, especially in cross-listed courses. In these courses students bring to the classroom different skills, backgrounds, and expectations. I see this as an opportunity to leverage each student's strength while learning new materials and perspectives. Students work in interdisciplinary teams to complete projects and report on their work, allowing them to bring in their individual skills and learn from each other. This also prepares students to professional life where teams are expected to work together to reach business goals.

I am prepared to develop and teach courses related to my research specialties, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These include Human-Computer Interaction, Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, Computer-Mediated Communication, and Information Visualization. I also served as a teaching assistant in more tech-based classes, including Design and Implementation of Information Systems, Information Retrieval, and Web Design. Taking many courses in statistics and in research methods, quantitative and qualitative, and applying them in my research, makes me prepared to teach these courses as well.

Beyond the Classroom

Outside the realm of the classroom I find numerous opportunities to teach students. During my graduate studies at Cornell University, I worked with numerous undergraduate, Master's, and PhD students in guiding, mentoring, and supervising them in the Human-Computer Interaction lab. This included a wide range of HCI-related work, from implementing software to qualitative and quantitative user studies. Although I carried out most of this effort to support my own research, I find great satisfaction in guiding

younger students toward reaching their own goals. For example, a student I mentored in summer 2008 decided as a result of our work together to apply to graduate schools with HCI programs.

When teaching individuals and groups in the lab I apply the same concepts I use in the classroom, namely, critical thinking, learning by doing, and teamwork. I do this by having ongoing meetings with students in which they have to think analytically about their projects and justify whatever they do; guiding students in actual software programming, design, or carrying out user studies; and having them coordinate with at least another person on their tasks.

When supervising students in the lab I attempt to be sensitive to those who need close and frequent supervision compared to those who are independent and only need general guidance with longer-term deliverables. I am satisfied from observing students develop their research and professional skills and become self-directed over time. I enjoy guiding students in writing and submitting their work to publications and in applying to business positions and to graduate school. I believe that my efforts as a tutor improve the research outcomes of the HCI lab and prepare me to advise graduate students.

Evaluation Scores and Student Comments

Courses taught and overall student evaluation scores

Cornell University			
Spring 2007	INFO/CS 230	Intermediate Design and Programming for the Web	4.1/5
Spring 2006	INFO/COMM 345	Human-Computer Interaction[1]	
Fall 2005	INFO/COMM 440/640	Advanced Human-Computer Interaction	4.0/5
Spring 2005	INFO/COMM 345	Human-Computer Interaction[1]	
Fall 2004	INFO/CS 430	Information Retrieval[1]	
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology			
Spring 2000	094221	Design and Implementation of Information Systems[1]	
Fall 1999	094221	Design and Implementation of Information Systems[1]	
Spring 1999	094221	Design and Implementation of Information Systems[1]	
Fall 1998	094221	Design and Implementation of Information Systems	4.2/5

[1] Evaluations were not administered

Comments from students in the HCI lab

"Gilly is very agreeable and easy to work with. Along with her demeanor, she helped create a conductive environment for learning. In the HCI lab, she give me every opportunity to get involved in the GroupMeter project and further my research experience."

"Gilly Leshed is an incredibly dedicated and talented teacher and mentor. She tirelessly works to inspire students both with class work as well as other research opportunities, broadening her students' views beyond common knowledge and thinking."

"Gilly has been great to work with and is always has a positive attitude. As mentor she is always willing to explain something you don't understand and does a good job doing so. I think she cares a lot about students actually learning as opposed to just completing the required work."

"I would personally love to have Gilly as a professor for my classes."

"I'd like to list words that describe Gilly: approachable, active, likes challenging, willing to help and share experiences, thoughtful, passionate and hardworking."