

Jason's Tips for surviving DSP lab

Come to lab on time with your pre-lab completed. Pre-labs are due at the beginning of lab and will not be accepted late. Unlike your post-lab reports, the pre-labs are intended to be done individually, and any indication of cheating will be turned over to the honor council. Pre lab reports are worth 25% of the lab grade.

Post lab reports are to be completed with your lab partner. They are due one week after the scheduled lab and only one copy per group needs to be turned in. Late post lab reports may be turned in with a 2% penalty per day late.

READ THE ENTIRE LAB REPORT BEFORE COMING TO LAB. If you come to lab without reading the lab write-up first you will not be able to finish the lab in the given lab period, and it will most likely take you at least 3x longer to finish the assignment. Trust me; I have experience in this department.

In lab you will be working in teams of two to complete the lab assignment. Since computers only have one set of input devices (1 keyboard and 1 mouse) it is likely that only one person will be "driving" the computer at a time. It has been my experience that the person who is operating the controls learns all the material very well, and the other is left behind. Most of the lab assignments have several sections. I suggest taking turns at the keyboard, swapping after each section. When I took the course my lab partner and I had an interesting system, we shared the responsibilities of the keyboard and mouse. While I was using the keyboard my partner had control of the mouse for a while, then we would swap. This kept both group members involved at all times, and instigated much necessary communication, but worked about as well as a blinded Cyclops trying to cut down a tree with a butter knife. My suggestion is to find a solution that works for you, but remember, if you felt that you would like to retry a part of the lab section on your own, or you did not complete the lab and need to go home for dinner, the lab is always available (when it isn't in use by another lab section) just punch in the door combo, and away you go.

The post lab reports are fairly open ended assignments. Keep in mind that your lab reports should be professionally presented. Think of how your boss would respond to typos and grammar mistakes. Since you are typing the reports anyhow, check for these mistakes before you hit print. I will take off points for obvious spelling and grammar mistakes. Usually there are clues sprinkled around the lab write-up of what to include in your report, i.e. what we will be looking for when grading, this is yet another reason to read the write-up carefully.

Since there is not much to do for the first lab, I suggest getting your report format figured out. Generate a template which you can use to follow for future labs. I suggest the age-old formula of

Introduction-(tell them what you are doing.)

Body-(tell them what you did / how you did it.)

Conclusion-(tell them what you did again, with some results.)

Finally don't include reams of un-necessary data, this will not improve you grade. If you have a lot of data to present consider the best format, if you are demonstrating a trend perhaps a graph would better illustrate your conclusions. You don't have to include output of test runs unless specifically asked for in the lab report, it is assumed that you have completed all sections of the lab. If you have not, it is your responsibility under the honor code to include listing of any unfinished sections if you lab report.