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Assignment #1: Lessons Learned

During the first semester of Senior Design, I struggled a lot with waiting on external parties before moving forward with the project. It is typical for sponsors, professors, and others associated with the project you are working on to have aspects of their life that prevent them from being timely in helping you with your project. Because of this you must take the initiative to complete the task as best you can without their assistance because life will get in their way, and there is nothing you can do about it. When you get into industry employers aren’t going to be receptive to employees who sit around and do nothing if they are waiting on another party to be finished first. Instead, it is better to do what you can without assistance and move onto other aspect of the project that you do have the ability to work on so that you are blameless in the eyes of your peers and your employer.

The first semester of Senior Design is fought with different types of project documentation; however, you are still expected to work on your project outside of these documents. Therefore, you cannot put of the creation of the documents in each sprint because it is often college student behavior, in team projects, to not only wait until the last minute to complete the bare minimum, but to also put every other aspect of the project on hold because the documentation isn’t finished. I believe that it is better for a team to spend the early parts of a sprint completing the documentation because it is easier to focus on more abstract parts of a project if there isn’t a homework assignment looming over your heads. This is basically my “DoN’t PrOcRaStInAtE” public service announcement.

A significant part of getting any project done as a team is team cohesion and personal investment. Because students don’t have the luxury of being paid to do homework the motivation to team-based projects can often be hard to develop. However, one way to help boost your motivation is to consistently be meeting up in-person (preferably) or online. Having the constant contact with your team will help maintain a sense of community with your teammates; helping you develop the desire to do well, not just for yourself but for the team as well. The hardest part about this aspect of team projects is simply meeting on a consistent basis. To combat this issue, try your hardest to be flexible with your schedule and be willing to have a dynamic meetup schedule. If you can’t meet the same day every week, then schedule a meeting day each time you meet that satisfies every person’s scheduling requirement. Even then if not everyone can meet then that is fine, you can fill in your teammates later but do not stop group meetings because not everyone can attend.