**Temperature Prediction and Optimization Model for Night Flushing**

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**Abstract**

We have developed a hybrid (First Principles/Data Driven) model to predict the instantaneous air and mass temperatures of a classroom in the La Escuelita Education Center (LEEC), located in Oakland, CA. The building’s primary mode of cooling is night flushing: the use of forced ventilation at night with the combination of thermal mass walls and floors, allowing radiant cooling to take place during the day when the building is occupied. We have obtained trends of the airflow, mass temperature, room temperature, and outdoor air temperature from the school’s building management system (BMS) for the months of June to November (the cooling season). With the BMS data set and our prediction model, we have developed a control strategy for the ventilation system to minimize energy and maintain comfortable temperatures.

**Introduction**

Buildings in the U.S. consume about 40% of the primary energy, where a large percentage goes into HVAC and lighting systems of the building [1]. A strategy that has the potential to reduce energy consumption and peak demand is through thermal storage capacity. There are two versions of building thermal capacity, active and passive. Active building thermal capacity refers to thermal energy storage systems that mechanically create and store chilled water or ice for later use. On the other hand, a passive building thermal storage capacity refers to the use of the building’s envelope, internal construction, and furniture to help cool the building throughout the day [2]. Simulation exercises have shown to have an energy reduction potential of 0-35% and a demand peak reductions of up to 15% through the use of this strategy [3]. For this project, we will investigate a semi-passive building thermal storage capacity in which ventilation rates are increased throughout the cooler temperatures of the night to precool the building during summer days. This strategy is commonly known as “night flushing” and has the greatest savings potential when the mass of the building is large and night time ambient temperatures are low [2], [4].

This strategy, along with other passive strategies, are becoming more common as Net Zero Energy Buildings (NZEBs) become more prevalent. That being said, not many data sets from buildings that use night flushing currently exist. This provides a unique opportunity to investigate and optimize its performance in the La Escuelita Education Center Building. This education building is 21,470 ft2 in size with 10 classrooms that use night flushing. The current controls of the building’s night flushing strategy are not optimized resulting in a required morning warmup of the building, preventing the temperatures of thermal mass surfaces from getting too low and making occupants feel thermally uncomfortable. Thus, eliminating the morning warmup of the building will reduce the building’s energy consumption and yield greater energy savings.

There will be some challenges in optimizing this building’s strategy because there are not many systems like this in the field in which we can reference. Design engineers of the building had to set the control strategy with many assumptions. A positive is that there are laboratory studies and simulation studies that have addressed these issues. For example, Kintner-Meyer and Emery (1994), Braun (2003), and Lui and Henze (2005) established cost functions based on the costs of electricity and demand charges to optimize night flushing strategies and active building thermal capacity strategies [2], [4], [5]. A similar approach will be taken when optimizing the number of night flushing hours for this project. In addition, we do not know which parameters are important to build a first principles model. That is, we do not know if ventilation flow rates or occupancy will be important to build a model. Another challenge in creating a first principles model will be how to take into account the thermal mass of the classroom surfaces. Furthermore, the design team has logged various data that can help with the model, but we are unsure of how to incorporate it.

**Technical Description**

Methodology

*System Modeling*

Our first modeling objective was to determine the relationship between supply temperature and ventilation rate with indoor air temperature and mass temperature for a classroom using mechanical night flushing. Our second modeling objective was to determine how this relationship can be used to predict instantaneous air temperature and mass temperature.

To achieve our modeling objective, two different models were created and trialed for parameter identification. Model version 1 directly takes air flow and supply temperature into account. Model version 2 estimates the power from the ventilation system using a conditional state function based on ventilation rate. Details of each model can be seen below.

*Table 1: Description of parameters & variables in dynamical equations*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Symbol*** | ***Description*** | ***Units*** |  | ***Subscript*** | ***Description*** |
| T | Temperature | [°F] |  | z | Zone |
| R | Thermal Resistance | [°F-hr/BTU] |  | a | Ambient |
| C | Thermal Capacitance | [BTU/°F] |  | w | Wall |
| V | Ventilation Rate | [ft3/hr] |  | f | Floor |
| s | Ventilation State | [0/1] |  | v | Supply |
| ρ | Density | [lb/ft3] |  |  |  |
| c | Specific Heat | [BTU/lb-°F] |  |  |  |
| P | Ventilation Power | [BTU] |  |  |  |

**Model Version 1**

Controllable Inputs:

Uncontrollable Inputs:

Outputs:

Parameters:

The following are the dynamical equations, state definitions, and input definitions chosen for model 1.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

Because equation 1 is non-linear in the inputs & states (4th term), we had to linearize around equilibrium. We chose the first points in our data set as equilibrium points for simplicity. These points were, , , , , and . To linearize the system, we used equation 6, which produces new dynamical equations, 7, 8 and 9.

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

When we set up the dynamical equations into state space form, we see that almost all of the terms of equation 7 that do not contain a state or an input (i.e. the terms that are constant) disappear, with the exception of one term. Because = 0, this final term also disappears. Matrix A and B are seen below in equations 10 and 11.

(10)

(11)

**Model Version 2**

Controllable Inputs:

Uncontrollable Inputs:

Outputs:

Parameters:

The following are the dynamical equations, state definition, and input definitions chosen for model 2. Model two is linear and does require any further linearization. In this model, the final term of the first dynamical equation is replace by the function s(t). This function is equal to 0 whenever the air flow rate falls below 400 cfm and equal to 1 whenever the air flow rate falls above 400 cfm.

(12)

(13)

(14)

(15)

(16)

Matrix A and B are seen below in equations 10 and 11.

(17)

(18)

*Parameter Identification*

Although model versions 1 and 2 were both tested for parameter identification, model 2 produced more accurate results, so methodology for model 2 is shown below. The following are the dynamical equations expressed in theta-phi form.

(19)

(20)

(21)

(22)

(23)

(24)

Once the dynamical equations were in theta-phi form, we loaded the training data and calculated the persistence of excitation. Our training data is from one classroom (room 110) in the LEEC that is using night flushing as its primary cooling method. Our full data set is from June 30th to October 16th. We used only the first ten days of data, June 30th to July 9th, as our training data. The following persistence of excitation results were produced: PE level for is 0.0326, PE level for is 1.1084, and PE level for is 4.2929. All three PE levels are above zero, which indicates that the parameters are identifiable.

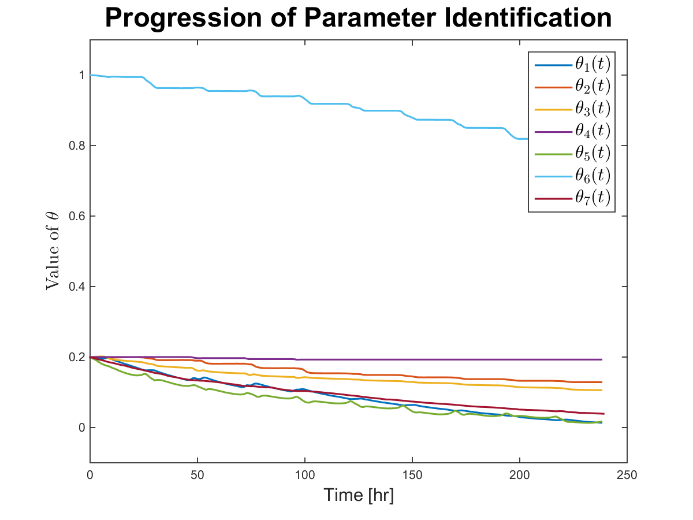
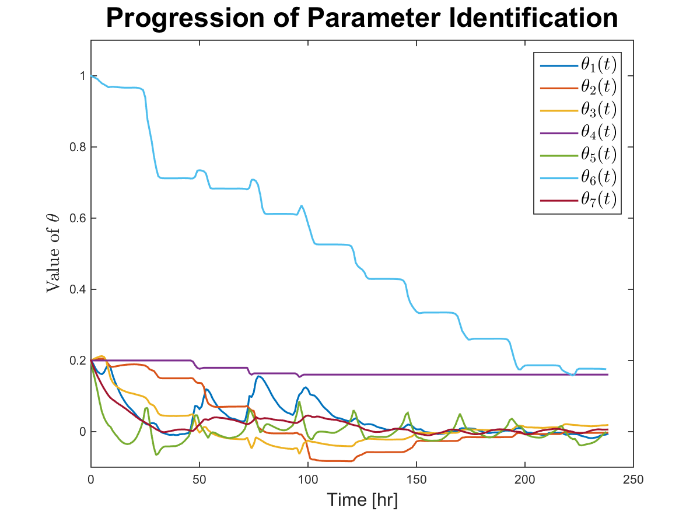
To identify the parameters, our first strategy was to use the gradient update law. We started by randomly choosing initial conditions for theta and a value for gamma, and then compared the final simulation to the training data. We iterated this process until we found initial conditions and a gamma that produced a simulation that was fairly representative of the training data. The best iteration was a result of the initial conditions and gamma seen in equations 25 through 28. These results can be seen in figures 1 through 4.

(25)

(26)

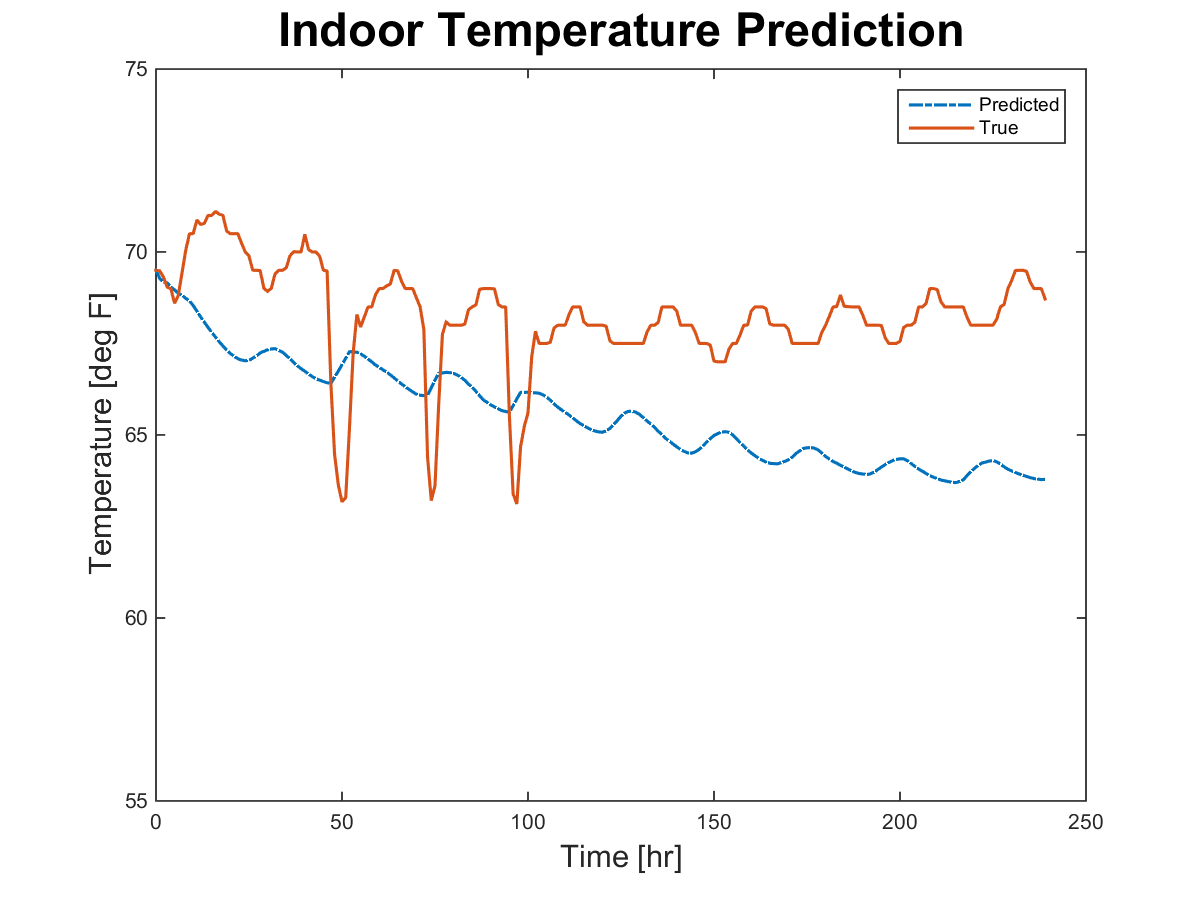
(27)

(28)

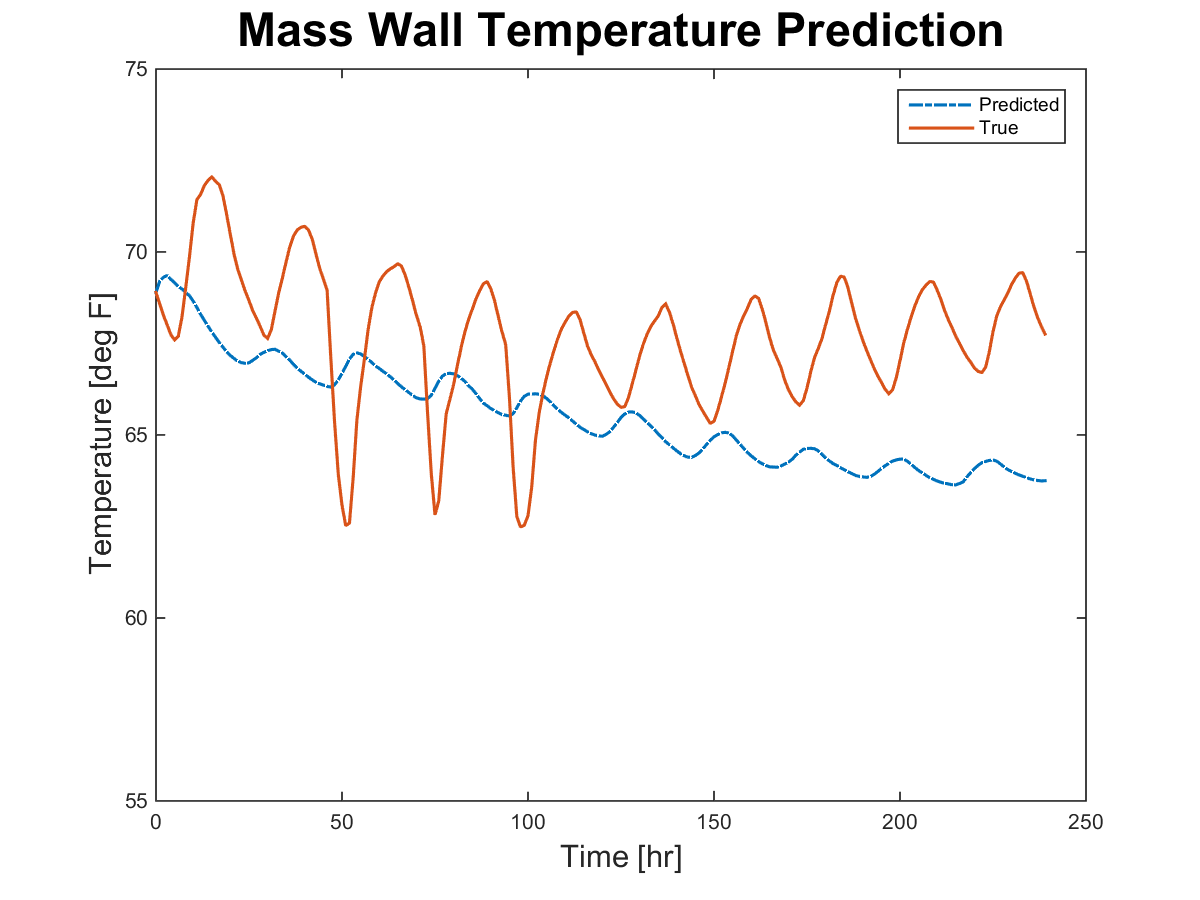


*Figure 1: a) Progression of theta\_hat over training data with gamma = 0.1, b) Progression of theta\_hat over training data with gamma = 0.01*

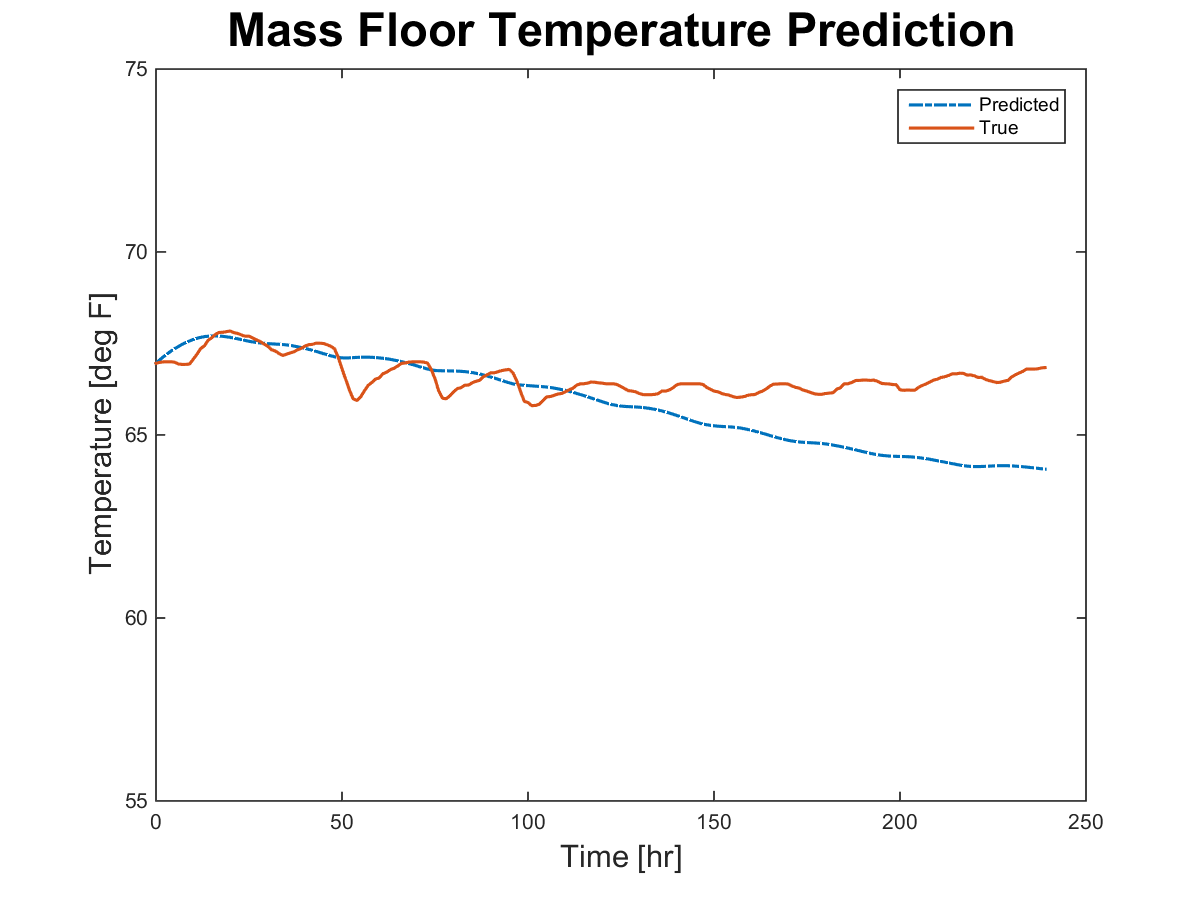
Parameter identification was unstable with a gamma of 0.1, as shown in figure 1a, by the spikes in theta\_hat throughout the gradient update.



*Figure 2: Predicted (from gradient descent) and true indoor air temperature over training data*

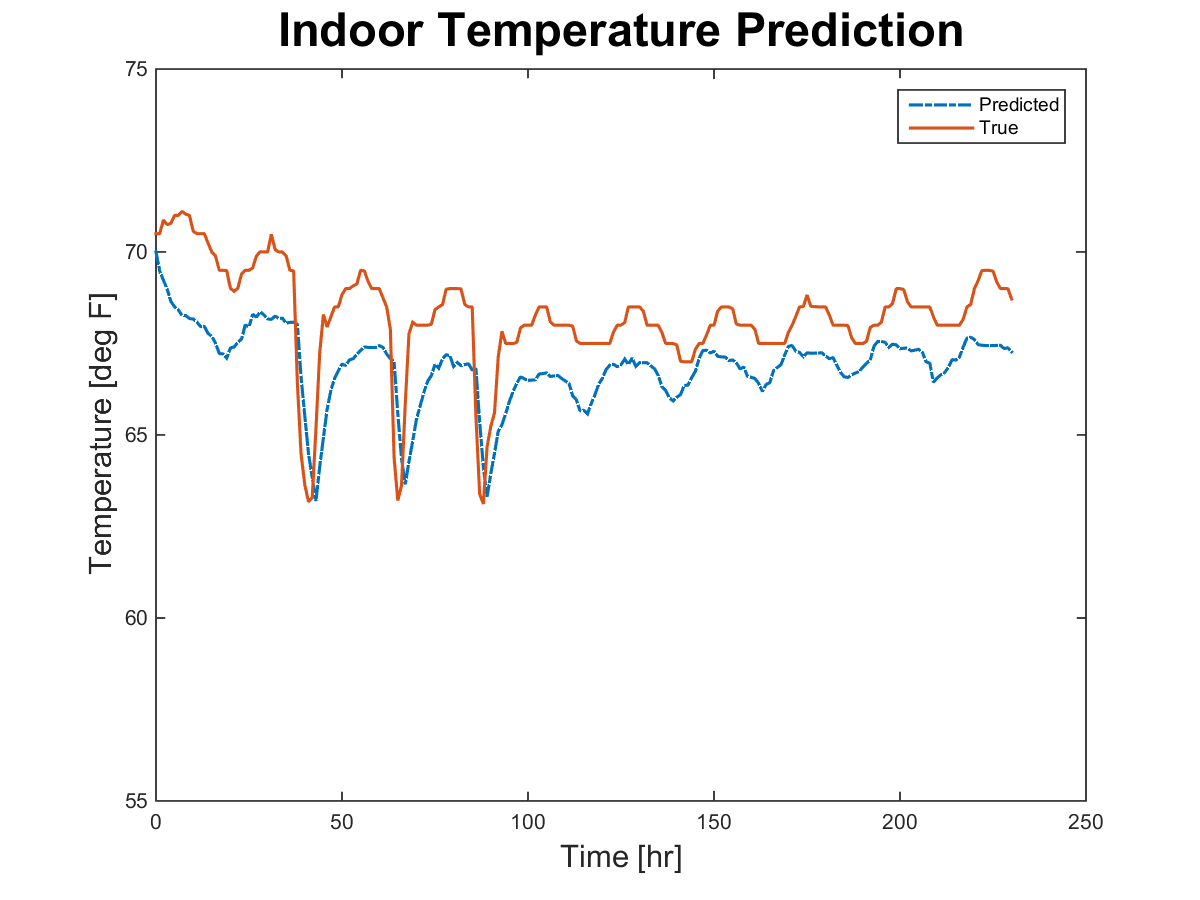


*Figure 3: Predicted (from gradient descent) and true mass wall temperature over training data*

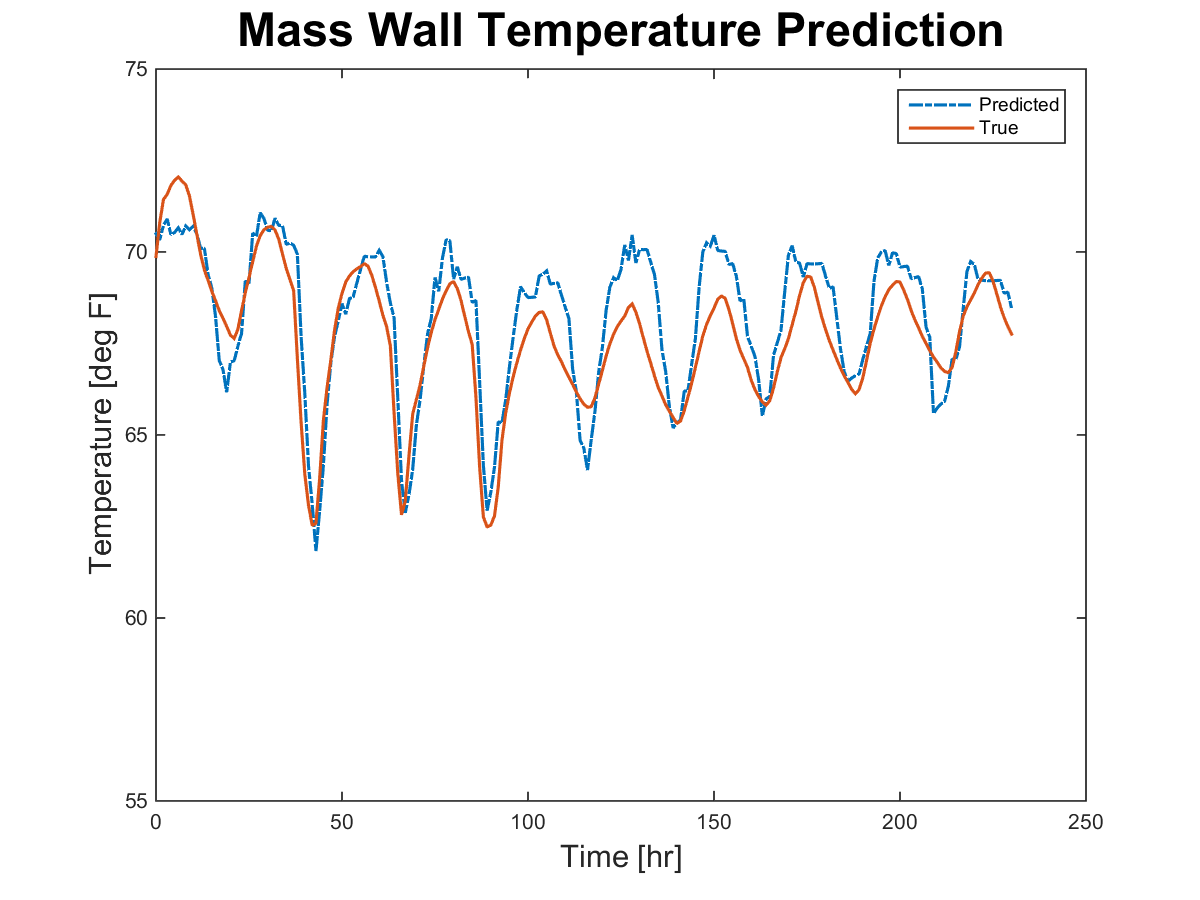


*Figure 4: Predicted (from gradient descent) and true mass floor temperature over training data*

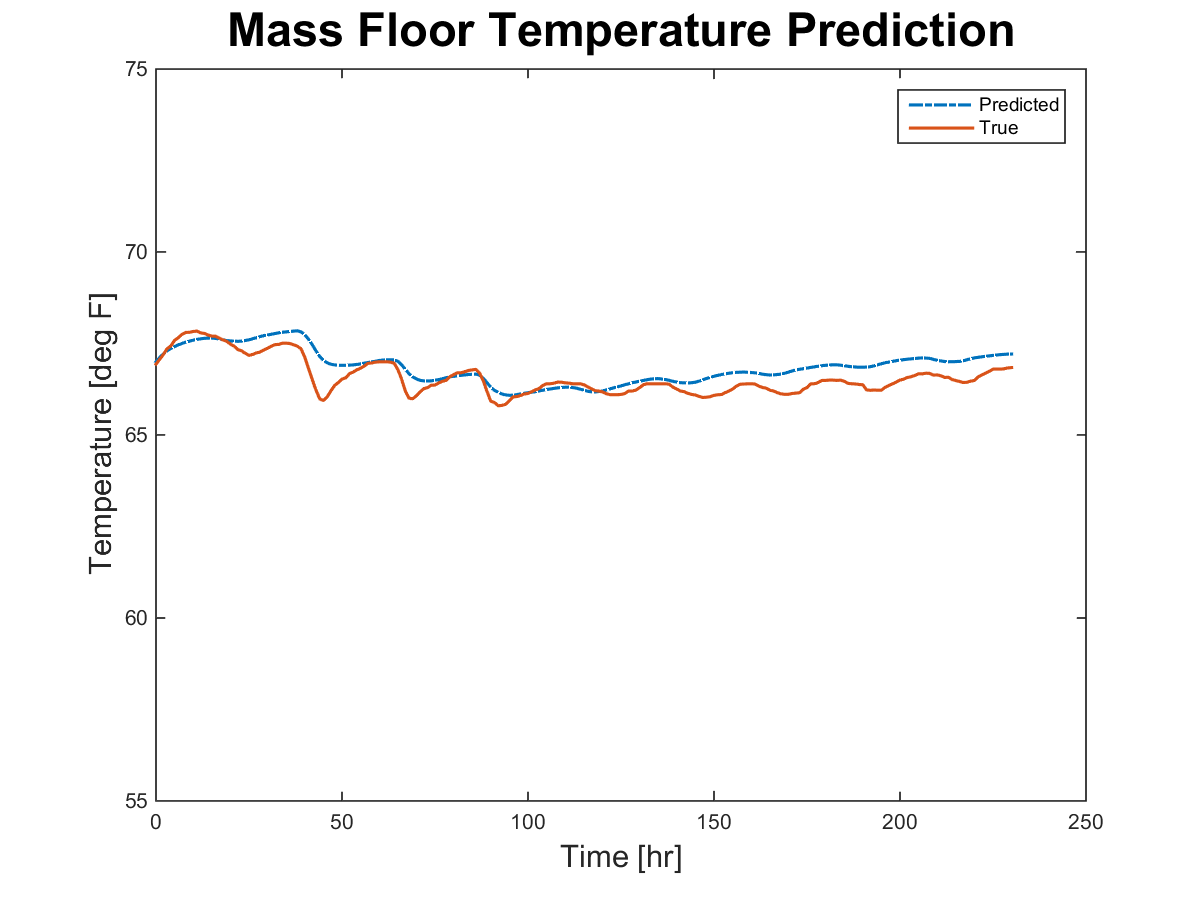
Although these were the best results from the gradient descent, they were still not yet close enough to training data set to be a representative model. It was therefore decided to use an alternative estimation approach, known as the least square (LSQ) non-linear function. This method minimizes the square error between the simulation results and the training data. To begin the LSQ non-linear method, we input the final theta values from the gradient descent as initial estimates for theta. The function does 100 iterations for each parameter, so in this case 700 iterations. Once a set of 700 iterations was complete, we replaced the initial estimates for theta with the final values from the previous iteration. This process was done about 10 times until the simulations produced no further improvements in reducing the error. The results can be seen in figures 5 through 7 and the final values of theta can be seen in equations 29 to 31.



*Figure 5: Predicted (from LSQ least-squares) and true indoor air temperature over training data*



*Figure 6: Predicted (from LSQ least-squares) and true mass wall temperature over training data*



*Figure 7: Predicted (from LSQ least-squares) and true mass floor temperature over training data*

(29)

(30)

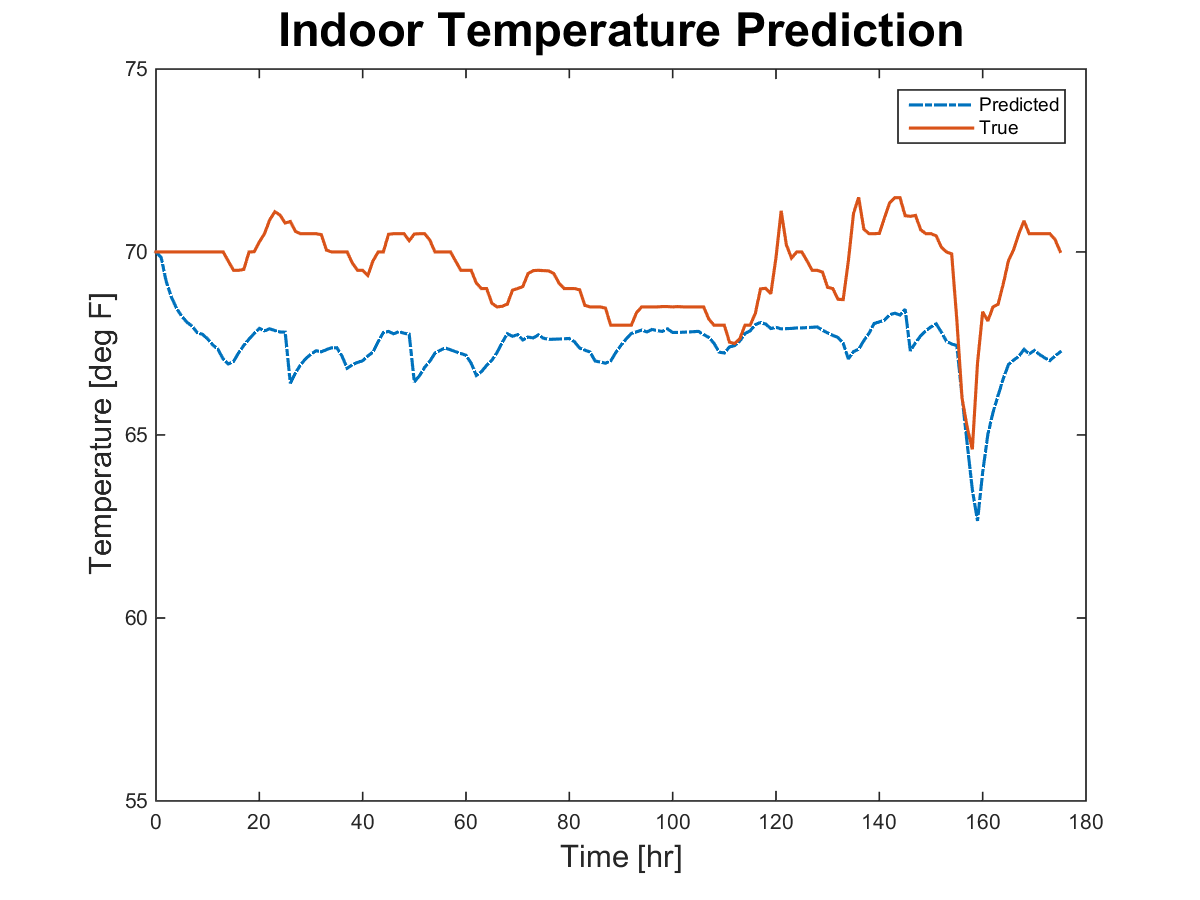
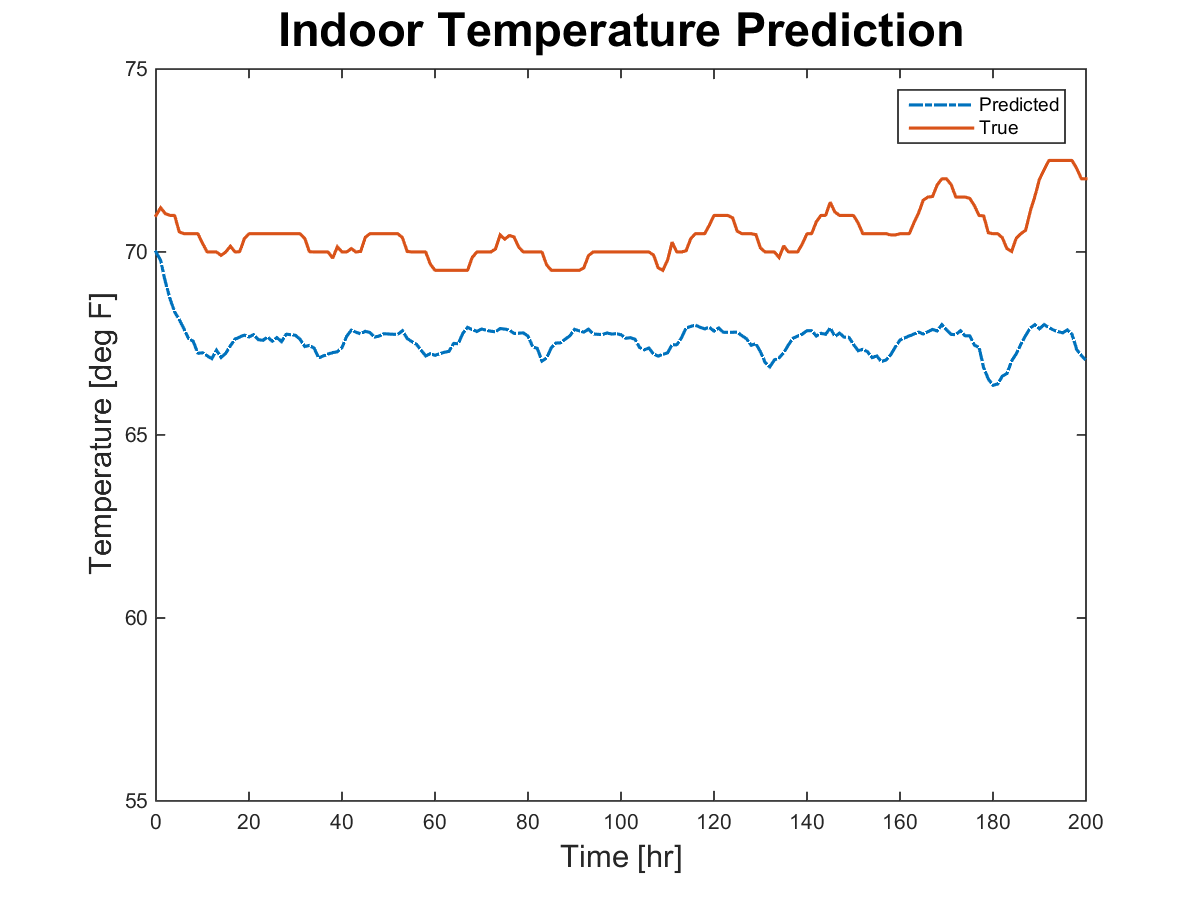
(31)

It should be noted that the final parameters probably do not represent real physical characteristics because they were developed using a non-linear black box function.

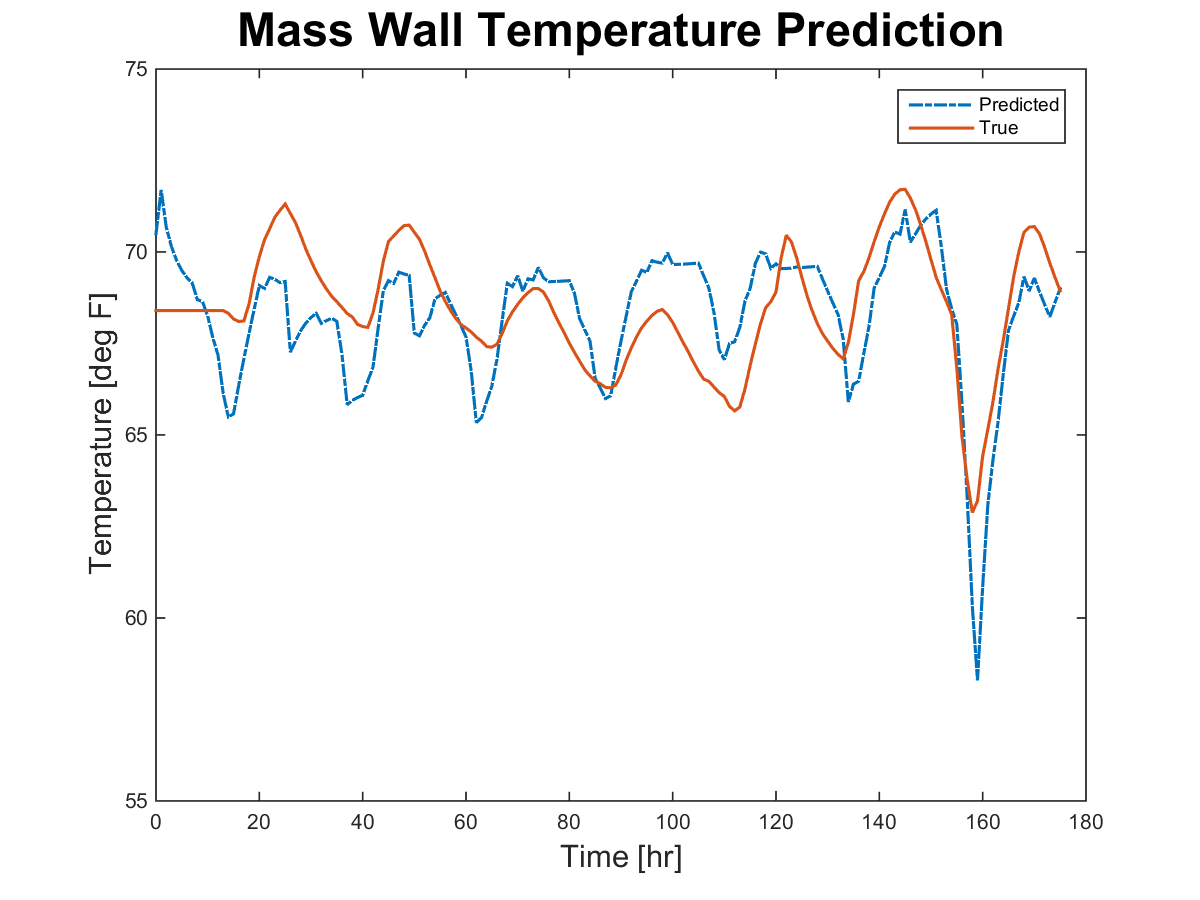
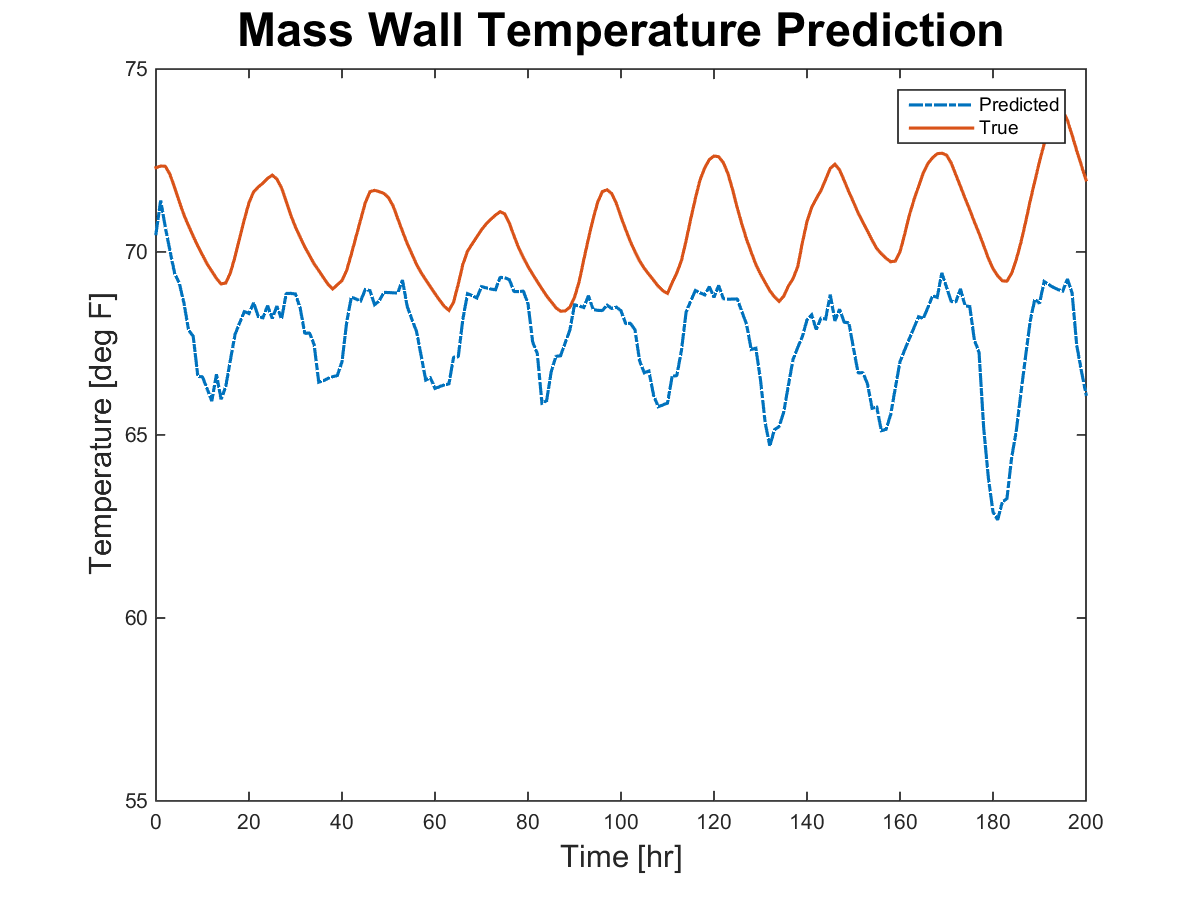
*Parameter Validation*

**Validation using Test Data**

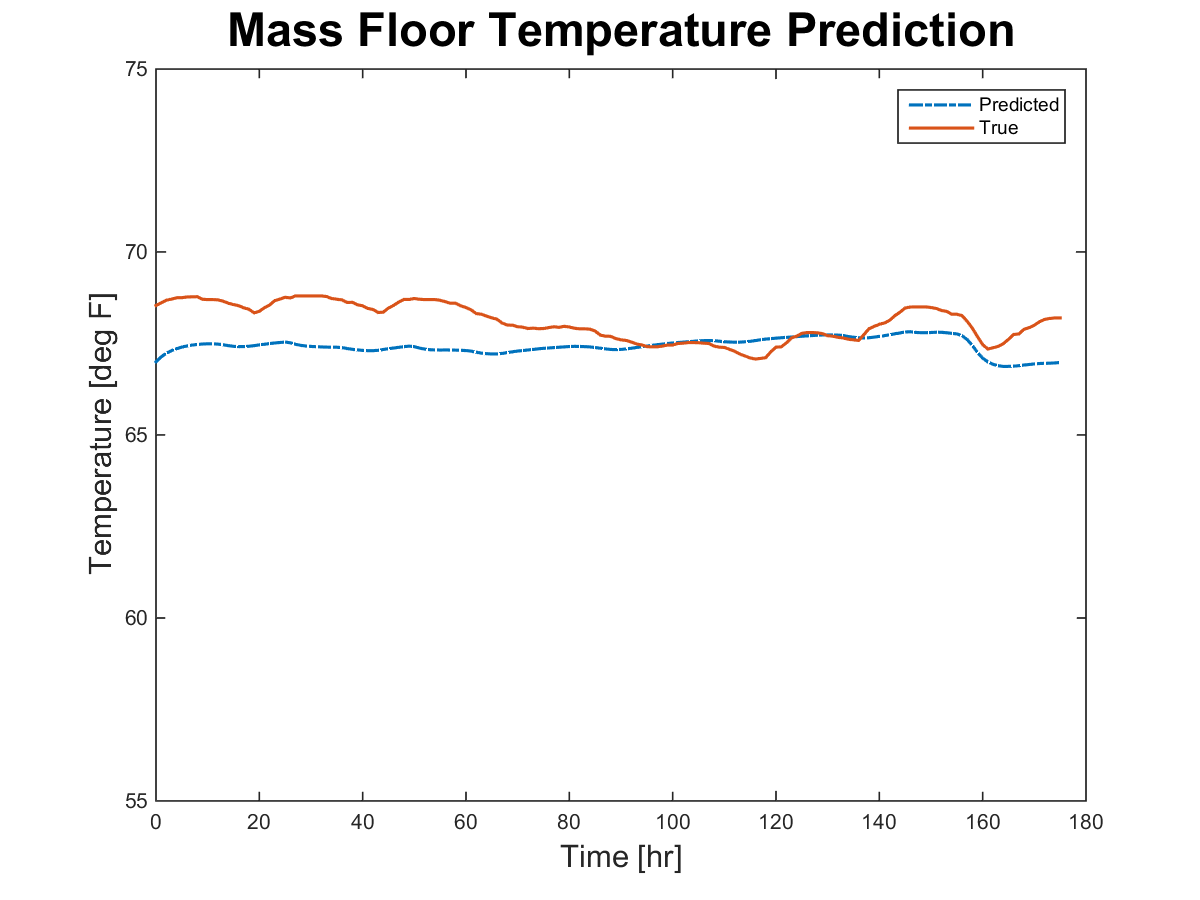
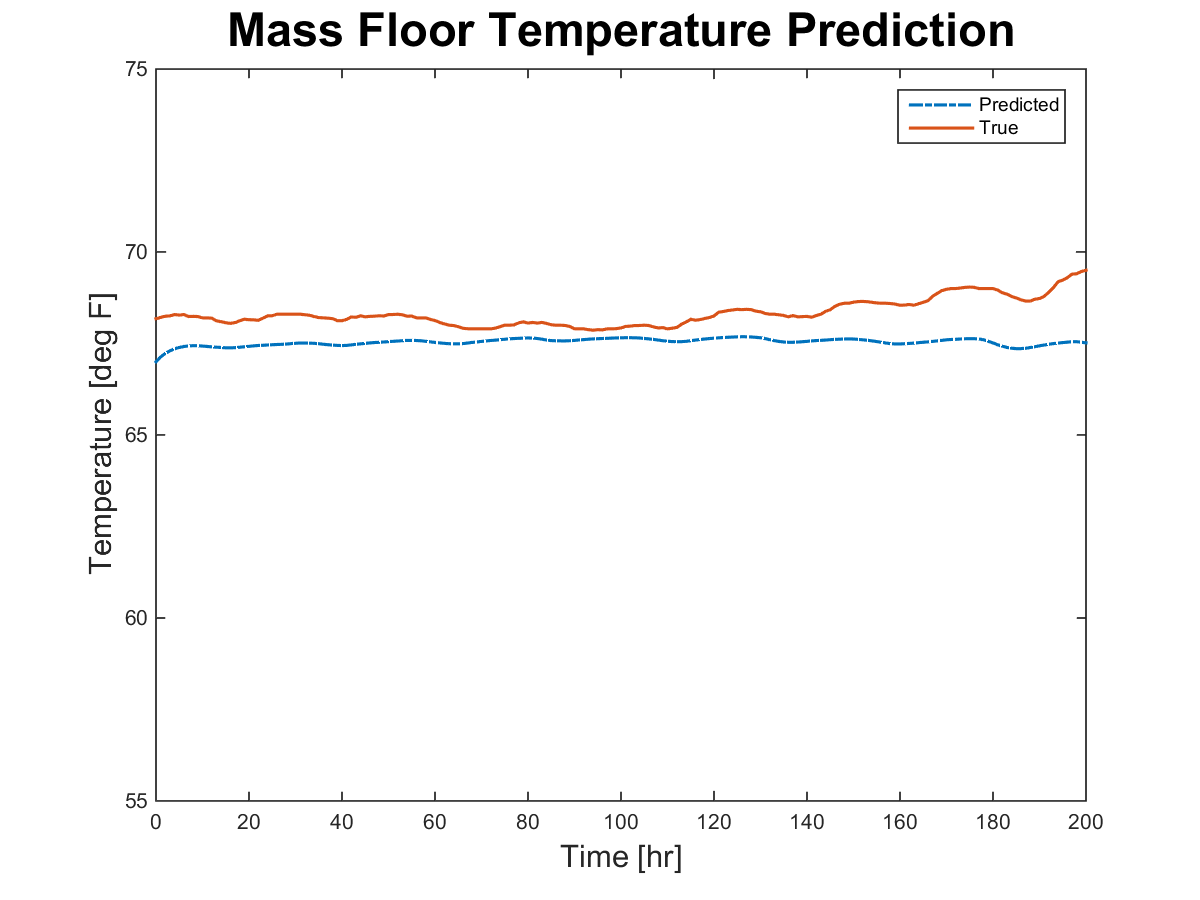
Our model was validated using two sets of test data, both from the same classroom as the training data, but from different dates. The first set of test data is from July 17th to July 25th. During this time span, the s(t) function remains constant at 0. The second set of test data is from September 4th to September 11th. During this time span, the s(t) function is both 0 and 1. The simulation results from both test data sets can be seen in figures 8 through 10. It should be noted that our model produced better results for test data set 2.



*Figure 8: a) Predicted and true indoor air temperature over test data set 1, b) Predicted and true indoor air temperature over test data set 2*



*Figure 9: a) Predicted and true mass wall temperature over test data set 1, b) Predicted and true mass wall temperature over test data set 2*



*Figure 10: a) Predicted and true mass floor temperature over test data set 1, b) Predicted and true mass floor temperature over test data set 2*

**Validation using Real Parameters**

An alternative method to validate the model is to compare the model parameters to the “real” parameters. To find the real parameters, we first had to determine the physical properties of the room and room construction. To find these values, we used the mechanical and architectural construction documents. These properties can be seen in tables 2 and 3. Equations 32 through 39 show how each parameter was calculated.

*Table 2: Description of room and material properties*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Symbol*** | ***Description*** | ***Units*** |  | ***Subscript*** | ***Description*** |
| ρ | Density | [lb/ft3] |  | Conc | Concrete |
| c | Specific Heat | [BTU/lb-°F] |  | Cem | Cement |
| t | Thickness | [in] |  | Ceil | Ceiling |
| L | Length | [ft] |  | Air | Air |
| W | Width | [ft] |  | room | Room |
| H | Height | [ft] |  | film, in | Inside air film |
| Rei | Thermal Resistance per Inch | [°F-ft2-hr/(BTU-in)] |  | film, out | Outside air film |
| Re | Thermal Resistance | [°F-ft2-hr/BTU] |  | ins | Insulation |

*Table 3: Values of room and material properties*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Variable*** | ***Value*** |
| Lroom | 38 |
| Wroom | 49.5 |
| Hroom | 10 |
| tconc | 4 |
| tcem | 2 |
| tceil | .5 |
| ρconc | 145 |
| ρcem | 95 |
| ρair | 0.0749 |
| cconc | 0.23 |
| ccem | 0.37 |
| cair | 0.2403 |
| Reiconc | 0.07 |
| Reicem | 0.26 |
| Reiceil | 0.45 |
| Reins | 20 |
| Refilm,in | 0.68 |
| Refilm,out | 0.17 |

(32)

(33)

(34)

(35)

(36)

(37)

(38)

The parameter of P represents the power of the ventilation system at maximum airflow. Therefore, we first had to determine what the maximum airflow was during our training data, and then find the time at which this airflow occurred. This time is designated as .

(39)

Finally, the “real” thetas can be seen equations 40 through 42. It should be noted that thetas from our model vary substantially from the thetas below. It should also be noted that simulations using the “real” thetas do not match the data, indicating that our dynamical equations may be too oversimplified to use real parameters in the model.

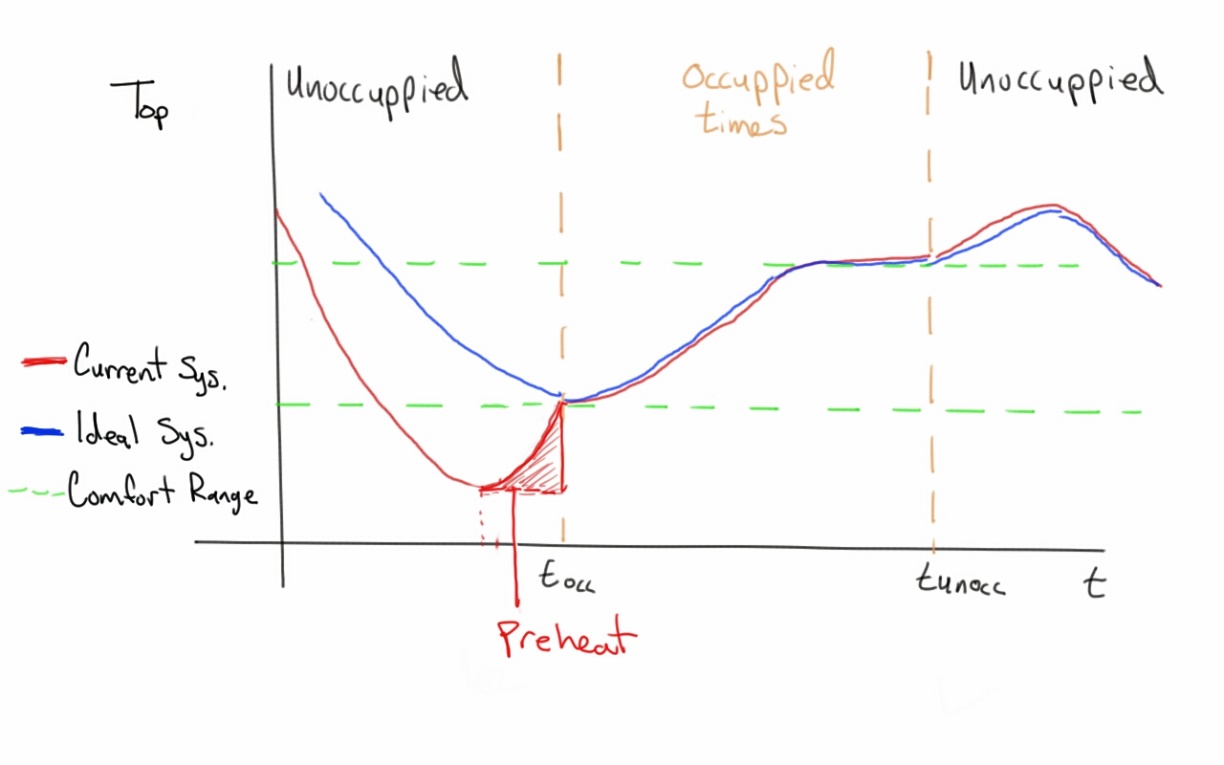
(40)

(41)

(42)

*Optimization*

The current setpoints in the actual building are causing the night flushing to overcool the room. Because the temperature of the room must fall within a specified comfort range during occupied hours, the system is doing a morning warmup before any occupants enter the building. This preheating is unnecessarily consuming energy that can be avoided through optimization. Figure 11 shows a sketch of the current control of the system in red. You will see a new variable below for operative temperature (TOP), which is a function of zone temperature, wall temperature, and floor temperature, as calculated in equation 43.



*Figure 11: Operative temperature under current and ideal ventilation controls over a 24 hour period*

(43)

The objective function and constraints of our optimization try to fix this overcooling problem. Our objective is to reduce (or even eliminate) preheating, therefore we want the operative temperature to be very close to the minimum bound of the comfort range when occupancy begins. Because there are different temperature and ventilation requirements for occupancy, it is necessary to break down the constraints by occupied and unoccupied times. For our simulation, we are establishing the following occupancy schedule: occupied from 8AM-5PM and unoccupied from 5PM-8AM. Tables 4 and 5 show the optimization variables, equation shows the objective function, and equations 45 through 52 show the equality and inequality constraints.

*Table 4: Description of optimization variables*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Symbol*** | ***Description*** | ***Units*** |  | ***Subscript*** | ***Description*** |
| T | Temperature | [°F] |  | Occ | Occupied |
| s | Ventilation State | [0/1] |  | Unocc | Unoccupied |
|  |  |  |  | Max | Maximum |
|  |  |  |  | Min | Minimum |
|  |  |  |  | OP | Operative |

*Table 5: Values of optimization variables*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Variable*** | ***Value*** |
|  | 0 |
|  | 1 |
|  | 0 |
|  | 0 |
|  | 78 |
|  | 85 |
|  | 69 |
|  | 60 |

(44)

(45)

(46)

(47)

(48)

(49)

(50)

(51)

(52)

Further explanation of optimization

Results

**Discussion**

**Summary**

**References**

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