

Assignment Feedback

Assignment 1a: MPC and GRS Practicals

Mean mark was **52%**

General remarks:

- Throughout the practical report, you **MUST ALWAYS** cite any literature source that relates to what you are writing – or at best the material will not be awarded marks – at worst you could be charged with plagiarism
- For the MPC prac, over 70% of your references should be scientific journal papers – the remainder being books or (exceptionally) websites
- When citing authors in the text, you only provide the Surname and year – not the initials of first name:

Bloggs (2003) and NOT Bloggs J (2003)

DO NOT write in ‘first person’ English:

“the results show...” NOT “my results show...”
“it was decided that the analysis...” NOT “I decided that my analysis”
“This section will deal with...” NOT “In this section I will look at....”

- Graphs and diagrams should have a caption and figure number. Graph axes need labels and units and Diagrams and maps should be big enough to read
- Avoid “quoting material from a source directly” if possible. If you do, then you must include the page number in the citation – better to synthesise the material and paraphrase (remembering to still cite correctly)
- Ensure font typeface and size is consistent throughout
- Read through several times before submission to spot spelling errors and missing sections. Get a friend to read through if that helps
- When formatting your reference list at the back – online **journals are formatted the same** as their paper counterparts:

Savage, MJ and Heilman, JL (2009). Infrared calibration of net radiometers and infrared thermometers. *Agricultural & forest meteorology*. 149 (8). PP 1279 – 1293.

**AND
NOT**

Savage, MJ and Heilman, JL (2009). Infrared calibration of net radiometers and infrared thermometers [online]: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. Accessed on 2nd February 2010.

MOST IMPORTANT: In the Africa Vegetation practical (MPC) the handout stated that the in-class introductory method of transect lines was just a start – and you should explore other functions of Idrisi and be creative in your analysis. In fact almost ALL of you ignored this and just handed in a couple of basic transect graphs which lost you all marks.

Your analysis must be quantitative and **NOT** just descriptive. Many of you *described* what your transect lines were doing (“it goes up in July” etc). You should **always** discuss the actual numbers (e.g. say “NDVI increased by 23% from February to July..”)

In the landcover classification exercise there several areas where mistakes were commonly made.

First, the lack of depth to the background section – this should be used to introduce the practical exercise and explore related works. For example, the introduction could have discussed the value of remote sensing in landcover and landuse classification and maybe even explored the differences between these types of classifications.

A second common problem was the failure to explain how the classification rule works and not just describe the difference between supervised and unsupervised classification approaches. Certainly the majority of work submitted did not explain the Maximum Likelihood decision rule clearly.

Finally, please note that any flowchart should accompany the methods description and not replace it. The focus of the flowchart should be on the data and methods used – avoid simply taking a “button pressing” approach to describe how to perform the task in IDRISI.

PLEASE

Try to take our comments on board. They are not meant to be negative comments – you learn from mistakes (we all do!) and improving the quality of your work is all part of your training to be professional scientists.

Take time to read the comments written on your scripts – these are specific to you. As you learn not to make these common mistakes, you will find your marks improving dramatically. This is a common sequence of events during a degree course.

Don't feel inclined to do the bare minimum required to just pass. Treat every assignment as though it makes the difference between getting a first class degree and an upper second. If you aim high you will achieve the best you can but if you aim to get a lower degree classification, you may achieve less than you are truly capable of.