Lab Suggestions:

*The Galaxies*

The labs overall were very helpful to understanding the concepts we learned in class. Especially when we did the rate law lab, we were able to see what we learned about actually happen. Often in a classroom it is hard to understand concepts when it is all abstract and conceptual. Labs help bring the abstract into real world examples that are easy to understand.

One way that the lab experience was made easier was through prelabs. I appreciated the prelabs, as they were very helpful in understanding just what I was doing. However, that doesn’t always mean I was doing it right. We never went over the prelabs, so I had no idea if I was doing the calculations correctly. Later when I got the prelab back I found out if I was correct, or if I had divided when I was really supposed to multiply or even use a different equation altogether. I understand that going over it would take away from class time however. Even if we just went over the prelab during flex as a class, with no teacher guidance, I think it would be very beneficial to the class. Most of the time, I have nothing to do in flex anyway, so spending it preparing and understanding the lab would be a better use of my time.

In addition to the prelab, in physics class with Ms. Lu, we were required to create a flowchart. This was a summary that included pictures, anything to help us better understand the lab procedure. I hated them, with a passion. It was extremely boring and distasteful, but it really did help us come better prepared for her labs. When people write out the procedure for lab reports, they just copy it word for word for the most part. By creating a flowchart with pictures, we were forced to really think about it.

Lastly, while this might seem a little cruel, I think everyone should have one lab where they work alone. When working with a partner, you don’t have to have the same level of responsibility and understanding of the lab. Working with a partner, you tend to rely more on your partner. When working alone, you have to really understand what you are doing. You have to make your own decisions, and if you have a question about the lab procedure, you can’t just ask your lab partner who may or may not be just as clueless as you are, you ask the teacher, which is the better course of action anyway. Group settings can be very beneficial as you bounce ideas off each other, you catch each other’s mistakes and it is overall easier. Sometimes in life, though, we won’t have the luxury to work in a group, and we will be entirely responsible for the project. It might seem unconventional, or even counterintuitive, but I actually felt more confident and achieved better results when
working alone. I prefer to work with a partner, as it is much easier and more fun, but working alone was a valuable experience. I think everyone would benefit from this experience.