The Verilog Hardware Description Language

- These slides were created by Prof. Don Thomas at Carnegie Mellon University, and are adapted here with permission.
- The Verilog Hardware Description Language, Fifth Edition, by Donald Thomas and Phillip Moorby is available from Springer, http://www.springer.com.

Verilog Overview

- Verilog is a concurrent language
  - Aimed at modeling hardware — optimized for it!
  - Typical of hardware description languages (HDLs), it:
    - provides for the specification of concurrent activities
    - stands on its head to make the activities look like they happened at the same time
      - Why?
    - allows for intricate timing specifications
- A concurrent language allows for:
  - Multiple concurrent "elements"
  - An event in one element to cause activity in another. (An *event* is an output or state change at a given time)
    - based on interconnection of the element's ports
  - Further execution to be delayed
    - until a specific event occurs

Simulation of Digital Systems

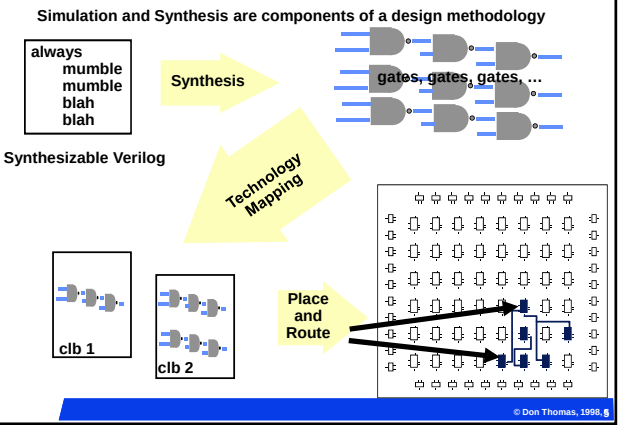
- Simulation —
  - What do you do to test a software program you write?
    - Give it some inputs, and see if it does what you expect
    - When done testing, is there any assurance the program is bug free? — NO!
    - But, to the extent possible, you have determined that the program does what you want it to do
  - Simulation tests a model of the system you wish to build
    - Is the design correct? Does it implement the intended function correctly? For instance, is it a UART
      - Stick in a byte and see if the UART model shifts it out correctly
    - Also, is it the correct design?
      - Might there be some other functions the UART could do?

Simulation of Digital Systems

- Simulation checks two properties
  - functional correctness — is the logic correct
    - correct design, and design correct
  - timing correctness — is the logic/interconnect timing correct
    - e.g. are the set-up times met?
- It has all the limitations of software testing
  - Have I tried all the cases?
  - Have I exercised every path? Every option?

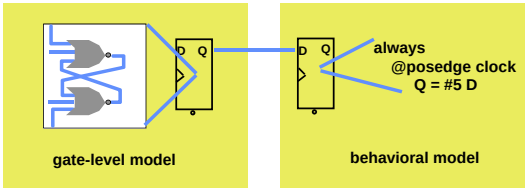
Modern Design Methodology

Simulation and Synthesis are components of a design methodology



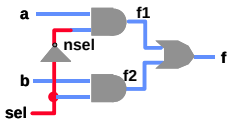
Verilog Levels of Abstraction

- Gate modeling (Structural modeling)
  - the system is represented in terms of primitive gates and their interconnections
    - NANDs, NORs, ...
- Behavioral modeling
  - the system is represented by a program-like language



Representation: Structural Models

- Structural models
  - Are built from gate primitives and/or other modules
  - They describe the circuit using logic gates — much as you would see in an implementation of a circuit.
- Identify:
  - Gate instances, wire names, delay from *a* or *b* to *f*.
  - This is a multiplexor — it selects one of n inputs (2 here) and passes it on to the output



f = a • sel' + b • sel

```
module MUX (f, a, b, sel);
output      f;
input       a, b, sel;

    and #5  g1 (f1, a, nsel),
            g2 (f2, b, sel);
    or  #5  g3 (f, f1, f2);
    not     g4 (nsel, sel);
endmodule
```

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Representation: Gate-Level Models

- Need to model the gate's:
  - Function
  - Delay
- Function
  - Generally, HDLs have built-in gate-level primitives
    - Verilog has NAND, NOR, AND, OR, XOR, XNOR, BUF, NOT, and some others
  - The gates operate on input values producing an output value
    - typical Verilog gate instantiation is:

optional "many"

and #delay instance-name (out, in1, in2, in3, ...);

and #5 g1 (f1, a, nsel);

a comma here let's you list other instance names and their port lists.

Four-Valued Logic

- Verilog Logic Values
  - The underlying data representation allows for any bit to have one of four values
  - 1, 0, x (unknown), z (high impedance)
  - x — one of: 1, 0, z, or in the state of change
  - z — the high impedance output of a tri-state gate.
- What basis do these have in reality?
  - 0, 1 … no question
  - z … A *tri-state* gate drives either a zero or one on its output. If it's not doing that, its output is high impedance (z). Tri-state gates are real devices and z is a real electrical affect.
  - x … not a real value. There is no *real* gate that drives an x on to a wire. x is used as a debugging aid. x means the simulator can't determine the answer and so maybe you should worry!
- BTW …
  - some simulators keep track of more values than these. Verilog will in some situations.

Four-Valued Logic

- Logic with multi-level logic values
  - Logic with these four values make sense
    - NAND anything with a 0, and you get a 1. This includes having an x or z on the other input. That's the nature of the nand gate
    - NAND two x's and you get an x
  - Note: z treated as an x on input. Their rows and columns are the same
  - If you forget to connect an input … it will be seen as an z.
  - At the start of simulation, *everything* is an x.

Input B

Input A

Nand	0	1	x	z
0	1	1	1	1
1	1	0	x	x
x	1	x	x	x
z	1	x	x	x

A 4-valued truth table for a Nand gate with two inputs

How to build and test a module

- Construct a "test bench" for your design
  - Develop your hierarchical system within a module that has input and output ports (called "design" here)
  - Develop a separate module to generate tests for the module ("test")
  - Connect these together within another module ("testbench")

```
module testbench ();
    wire      l, m, n;

    design   d (l, m, n);
    test      t (l, m);

    initial begin
        //monitor and display
        …
```

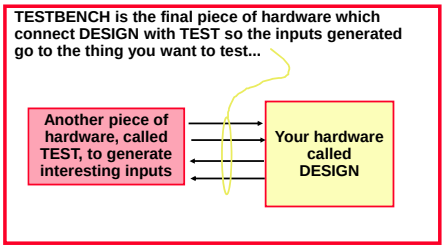
```
module design (a, b, c);
    input    a, b;
    output   c;
    …
```

```
module test (q, r);
    output   q, r;

    initial begin
        //drive the outputs with signals
        …
```


Another view of this

- 3 chunks of Verilog, one for each of:



An Example

Module testAdd generates inputs for module halfAdd and displays changes. Module halfAdd is the *design*

```
module tBench;
    wire     su, co, a, b;

    halfAdd      ad(su, co, a, b);
    testAdd      tb(a, b, su, co);
endmodule
```

```
module halfAdd (sum, cOut, a, b);
    output    sum, cOut;
    input     a, b;

    xor  #2   (sum, a, b);
    and #2    (cOut, a, b);
endmodule
```

```
module testAdd(a, b, sum, cOut);
    input    sum, cOut;
    output   a, b;
    reg      a, b;

    initial begin
        $monitor ($time,,
          "a=%b, b=%b, sum=%b, cOut=%b",
          a, b, sum, cOut);
        a = 0; b = 0;
        #10 b = 1;
        #10 a = 1;
        #10 b = 0;
        #10 $finish;
    end
endmodule
```


The test module

- It's the test generator
- $monitor
  - prints its string when executed.
  - after that, the string is printed when one of the listed values changes.
  - only one monitor can be active at any time
  - prints at end of current simulation time
- Function of this tester
  - at time zero, print values and set a=b=0
  - after 10 time units, set b=1
  - after another 10, set a=1
  - after another 10 set b=0
  - then another 10 and finish

```
module testAdd(a, b, sum, cOut);
    input    sum, cOut;
    output   a, b;
    reg      a, b;

    initial begin
        $monitor ($time,,
          "a=%b, b=%b, sum=%b, cOut=%b",
          a, b, sum, cOut);
        a = 0; b = 0;
        #10 b = 1;
        #10 a = 1;
        #10 b = 0;
        #10 $finish;
    end
endmodule
```


Another Version of a Test Module

- Multi-bit constructs
  - test is a two-bit register and output
  - It acts as a two-bit number (counts 00-01-10-11-00…)
  - Module tBench needs to connect it correctly — mod halfAdd has 1-bit ports.

```
module testAdd (test, sum, cOut);
    input          sum, cOut;
    output  [1:0]  test;
    reg     [1:0]  test;

    initial begin
        $monitor ($time,,
          "test=%b, sum=%b, cOut=%b",
          test, sum, cOut);
        test = 0;
        #10 test = test + 1;
        #10 test = test + 1;
        #10 test = test + 1;
        #10 $finish;
    end
endmodule
```

```
module tBench;
    wire   su, co;
    wire [1:0] t;

    halfAdd    ad (su, co, t[1], t[0]);
    testAdd    tb (t, su, co);
endmodule
```

Connects bit 0 of wire t to this port (b of the module halfAdder)

Yet Another Version of testAdd

- Other procedural statements
  - You can use "for", "while", "if-then-else" and others here.
  - This makes it easier to write if you have lots of input bits.

```
module testAdd (test, sum, cOut);
    input          sum, cOut;
    output  [1:0]  test;
    reg     [1:0]  test;

    initial begin
        $monitor ($time,,
          "test=%b, sum=%b, cOut=%b",
          test, sum, cOut);
        for (test = 0; test < 3; test = test + 1)
            #10;
        #10 $finish;
    end
endmodule
```

```
module tBench;
    wire   su, co;
    wire [1:0] t;

    halfAdd    ad (su, co, t[1], t[0]);
    testAdd    tb (t, su, co);
endmodule
```

hmm… "<3" … ?

Other things you can do

- More than modeling hardware
  - $monitor — give it a list of variables. When one of them changes, it prints the information. Can only have one of these active at a time. e.g. …
    - $monitor ($time,,, "a=%b, b=%b, sum=%b, cOut=%b",a, b, sum, cOut);
    - The above will print:
      2 a=0, b=0, sum=0, cOut=0<return>
  - $display() — sort of like printf()
    - $display ("Hello, world — %h", hexvalue)

extra commas print as spaces

%b is binary (also, %h, %d and others)

What if what you print has the value x or z?

newline automatically included

display contents of data item called "hexvalue" using hex digits (0-9,A-F)

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Structural vs Behavioral Models

- Structural model
  - Just specifies primitive gates and wires
  - i.e., the structure of a logical netlist
  - You basically know how to do this now.
- Behavioral model
  - More like a procedure in a programming language
  - Still specify a module in Verilog with inputs and outputs...
  - ...but inside the module you write code to tell what you want to have happen, NOT what gates to connect to make it happen
  - i.e., you specify the behavior you want, not the structure to do it
- Why use behavioral models
  - For testbench modules to test structural designs
  - For high-level specs to drive logic synthesis tools

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How do behavioral models fit in?

- How do they work with the event list and scheduler?
  - Initial (and always) begin executing at time 0 in arbitrary order
  - They execute until they come to a "#delay" operator
  - They then suspend, putting themselves in the event list 10 time units in the future (for the case at the right)
  - At 10 time units in the future, they resume executing where they left off.
- Some details omitted
  - ...more to come

```
module testAdd(a, b, sum, cOut);
        input   sum, cOut;
        output  a, b;
        reg     a, b;

        initial begin
                $monitor ($time,,
                  "a=%b, b=%b,
                  sum=%b, cOut=%b",
                  a, b, sum, cOut);
                a = 0; b = 0;
                #10 b = 1;
                #10 a = 1;
                #10 b = 0;
                #10 $finish;
        end
endmodule
```

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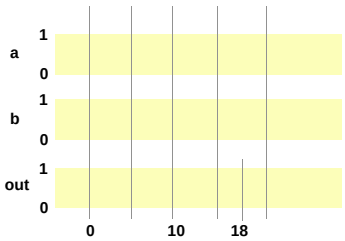
Two initial statements?

```
…
initial begin
        a = 0; b = 0;
        #5 b = 1;
        #13 a = 1;
end
…
initial begin
        #10 out = 0;
        #8 out = 1;
end
…
```



- Things to note
  - Which initial statement starts first?
  - What are the values of a, b, and out when the simulation starts?
  - These appear to be executing concurrently (at the same time). Are they?

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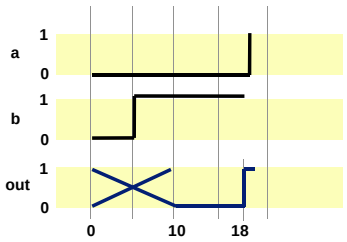
Two initial statements?

```
...
initial begin
        a = 0; b = 0;
        #5 b = 1;
        #13 a = 1;
end
...
initial begin
        #10 out = 0;
        #8 out = 1;
end
...
```



- **Things to note**
  - Which initial statement starts first? — They start at same time
  - What are the initial values of a, b, and out when the simulation starts? — Undefined (x)
  - These appear to be executing concurrently (at the same time). Are they? — Not necessarily

Behavioral Modeling

- ***Procedural*** **statements are used**
  - Statements using "initial" and "always" Verilog constructs
  - Can specify both combinational and sequential circuits
- **Normally don't think of procedural stuff as "logic"**
  - They look like C: mix of ifs, case statements, assignments …
  - … but there is a semantic interpretation to put on them to allow them to be used for simulation and synthesis (giving equivalent results)

Behavioral Constructs

- **Behavioral descriptions are introduced by initial and always statements**

Statement	Looks like	Starts	How it works	Use in Synthesis?
initial	initial begin … end	Starts when simulation starts	Execute once and stop	Not used in synthesis
always	always begin … end		Continually loop—while (sim. active) do statements;	Used in synthesis

- **Points:**
  - They all execute concurrently
  - They contain behavioral statements like if-then-else, case, loops, functions, …

Statements, Registers and Wires

- **Registers**
  - Define storage, can be more than one bit
  - Can only be changed by assigning value to them on the left-hand side of a behavioral expression.
- **Wires (actually "nets")**
  - Electrically connect things together
  - Can be used on the right-hand side of an expression
    - Thus we can tie primitive gates and behavioral blocks together!
- **Statements**
  - left-hand side = right-hand side
  - left-hand side must be a register
  - Four-valued logic

```
module silly (q, r);
   reg    [3:0]  a, b;
   wire   [3:0]  q, r;

   always begin
         …
         a =  (b & r) | q;
         …
         q = b;
         …
   end
endmodule
```

Multi-bit registers and wires

Logic with registers and wires

Can't do — why?

Behavioral Statements

- **if-then-else**
  - What you would expect, except that it's doing 4-valued logic. 1 is interpreted as True; 0, x, and z are interpreted as False
- **case**
  - What you would expect, except that it's doing 4-valued logic
  - If "selector" is 2 bits, there are 4^2 possible case-items to select between
  - There is no *break* statement — it is assumed.
- **Funny constants?**
  - Verilog allows for sized, 4-valued constants
  - The first number is the number of bits, the letter is the base of the following number that will be converted into the bits.

    8'b00x0zx10

```
if (select == 1)
        f = in1;
else    f = in0;
```

```
case (selector)
   2'b00: a = b + c;
   2'b01: q = r + s;
   2'bx1: r = 5;
   default: r = 0;
endcase
```

assume f, a, q, and r are registers for this slide

Behavioral Statements

- **Loops**
  - There are restrictions on using these for synthesis — don't.
  - They are mentioned here for use in test modules and behavioral models not intended for synthesis
- **Two main ones — for and while**
  - Just like in C
  - There is also repeat and forever

```
reg   [3:0]   testOutput, i;
…
for (i = 0; i <= 15; i = i + 1) begin
      testOutput = i;
      #20;
end
```

```
reg   [3:0]   testOutput, i;
…
i = 0;
while (i <= 15)) begin
      testOutput = i;
      #20 i = i + 1;
end
```

Important: Be careful with loops. Its easy to create infinite loop situations. More on this later.

Test Module, continued

- **Bit Selects and Part Selects**
  - This expression extracts bits or ranges of bits or a wire or register

The individual bits of register i are made available on the ports. These are later connected to individual input wires in module design.

```
module testgen (i[3], i[2], i[1], i[0]);
reg   [3:0]   i; output i;
always
      for (i = 0; i <= 15; i = i + 1)
            #20;
endmodule
```

```
module top;
wire  w0, w1, w2, w3;

testgen t (w0, w1, w2, w3);
design d (w0, w1, w2, w3);
end
```

```
module design (a, b, c, d);
input a, b, c, d;

mumble, mumble, blah, blah;
end
```

Alternate:

```
module testgen (i);
reg   [3:0]   i; output i;
always
      for (i = 0; i <= 15; i = i + 1)
            #20;
endmodule
```

```
module top;
wire  [3:0] w;

testgen t (w);
design d (w[0], w[1], w[2], w[3]);
end
```


Concurrent Constructs

- **We already saw #delay**
- **Others**
  - **@ … Waiting for a *change* in a value — used in synthesis**
    - @ (var) w = 4;
    - This says wait for var to change from its current value. When it does, resume execution of the statement by setting w = 4.
  - **Wait … Waiting for a value to be a certain level — not used in synthesis**
    - wait (f == 0) q = 3;
    - This says that if f is equal to zero, then continue executing and set q = 3.
    - But if f is not equal to zero, then suspend execution until it does. When it does, this statement resumes by setting q = 3.
- **Why are these concurrent?**
  - Because the event being waited for can only occur as a result of the concurrent execution of some other always/initial block or gate.
  - They're happening concurrently

FAQs: behavioral model execution

- How does an *always* or *initial* statement start
  - That just happens at the start of simulation — arbitrary order
- Once executing, what stops it?
  - Executing either a #delay, @event, or wait(FALSE).
  - All always blocks need to have at least one of these. Otherwise, the simulator will never stop running the model -- (it's an infinite loop!)
- How long will it stay stopped?
  - Until the condition that stopped it has been resolved
    - #delay ... until the delay time has been reached
    - @(var) ... until var changes
    - wait(var) ... until var becomes TRUE
- Does time pass when a behavioral model is executing?
  - No. The statements (if, case, etc) execute in zero time.
  - Time passes when the model stops for #, @, or wait.
- Will an *always* stop looping?
  - No. But an initial will only execute once.

Using a case statement

- Truth table method
  - List each input combination
  - Assign to output(s) in each case item.
- Concatenation
  - {a, b, c} concatenates *a*, *b*, and c together, considering them as a single item
  - Example

    a = 4'b0111

    b = 6'b 1x0001

    c = 2'bzx

  then {a, b, c} = 12'b01111x0001zx

```
module fred (f, a, b, c);
    output   f;
    input    a, b, c;
    reg      f;

    always @ (a or b or c)
        case ({a, b, c})
            3'b000: f = 1'b0;
            3'b001: f = 1'b1;
            3'b010: f = 1'b1;
            3'b011: f = 1'b1;
            3'b100: f = 1'b1;
            3'b101: f = 1'b0;
            3'b110: f = 1'b0;
            3'b111: f = 1'b1;
        endcase
endmodule
```

Check the rules ...

How about a Case Statement Ex?

- Here's another version ...

```
module fred (f, a, b, c);
    output   f;
    input    a, b, c;
    reg      f;

    always @ (a or b or c)
        case ({a, b, c})
            3'b000: f = 1'b0;
            3'b001: f = 1'b1;
            3'b010: f = 1'b1;
            3'b011: f = 1'b1;
            3'b100: f = 1'b1;
            3'b101: f = 1'b0;
            3'b110: f = 1'b0;
            3'b111: f = 1'b1;
        endcase
endmodule
```

check the rules...

Could put a function here too

```
module fred (f, a, b, c);
    output   f;
    input    a, b, c;
    reg      f;

    always @ (a or b or c)
        case ({a, b, c})
            3'b000: f = 1'b0;
            3'b101: f = 1'b0;
            3'b110: f = 1'b0;
            default: f = 1'b1;
        endcase
endmodule
```

Important: *every* control path is specified

Two inputs, Three outputs

```
reg   [1:0]    newJ;
reg            out;
input          i, j;
always @(i or j)
    case (j)
    2'b00:   begin
                 newJ = (i == 0) ? 2'b00 : 2'b01;
                 out = 0;
             end
    2'b01 :  begin
                 newJ = (i == 0) ? 2'b10 : 2'b01;
                 out = 1;
             end
    2'b10 :  begin
                 newJ = 2'b00;
                 out = 0;
             end
    default: begin
                 newJ = 2'b00;
                 out = 1'bx;
             end
endcase
```

Works like the C conditional operator.

(expr) ? a : b;

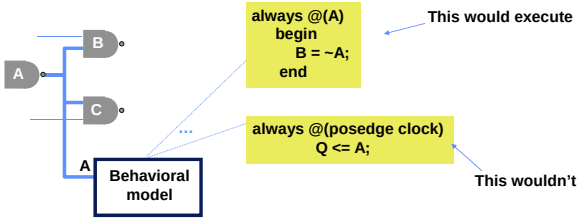
If the expr is true, then the resulting value is a, else it's b.

Behavioral Timing Model *(Not fully detailed here)*

- How does the behavioral model advance time?
  - # — delaying a specific amount of time
  - @ — delaying until an event occurs ("posedge", "negedge", or any change)
    - this is edge-sensitive behavior
  - wait — delaying until an event occurs ("wait (f == 0)")
    - this is level sensitive behavior
- What is a behavioral model sensitive to?
  - any change on any input? — No
  - any event that follows, say, a "posedge" keyword
    - e.g. @posedge clock
    - Actually "no" here too. — not always

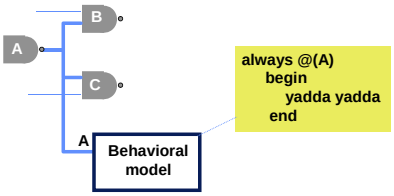
What are behavioral models sensitive to?

- Quick example
  - Gate A changes its output, gates B and C are evaluated to see if their outputs will change, if so, their fanouts are also followed…
  - The behavioral model will only execute if it was waiting for a change on the A input



Order of Execution

- In what order do these models execute?
  - Assume A changes. Is B, C, or the behavioral model executed first?
    - Answer: the order is *defined* to be arbitrary
  - All events that are to occur at a certain time will execute in an arbitrary order.
  - The simulator will try to make them look like they all occur at the same time — but we know better.



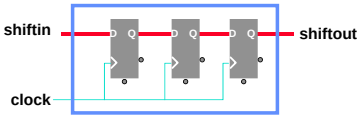
Arbitrary Order? Oops!

- Sometimes you need to exert some control
  - Consider the interconnections of this D-FF
  - At the positive edge of c, what models are ready to execute?
  - Which one is done first?

```
module dff(q, d, c);
   …
   always @(posedge c)
         q = d;
endmodule

module sreg (…);
   …
   dff     a (q0, shiftin, clock),
           b (q1, q0, clock),
           c (shiftout, q1, clock);
endmodule
```

Oops — The order of execution can matter!



Behavioral Timing Model

- How does the behavioral model advance time?
  - # — delaying a specific amount of time
  - @ — delaying until an event occurs — e.g. @v
    - "posedge", "negedge", or any change
    - this is edge-sensitive behavior
    - When the statement is encountered, the value v is sampled. When v changes in the specified way, execution continues.
  - wait — delaying until an event occurs ("wait (f == 0)")
    - this is level sensitive behavior
  - While one model is waiting for one of the above reasons, other models execute — time marches on

Wait

- Wait — waits for a level on a line
  - How is this different from an "@" ?
- Semantics
  - wait (expression) statement;
    - e.g. wait (a == 35) q = q + 4;
  - if the expression is FALSE, the process is stopped
    - when a becomes 35, it resumes with q = q + 4
  - if the expression is TRUE, the process is <u>not</u> stopped
    - it continues executing
- Partial comparison to @ and #
  - @ and # always "block" the process from continuing
  - wait blocks only if the condition is FALSE

An example of wait

```
module handshake (ready, dataOut, ...)
    input          ready;
    output  [7:0]  dataOut;
    reg     [7:0]  someValueWeCalculated;

    always begin
        wait (ready);
        dataOut = someValueWeCalculated;
        ...
        wait (~ready)
        ...
    end
endmodule
```

Do you always get the value right when ready goes from 0 to 1? Isn't this edge behavior?

Wait vs. While

- Are these equivalent?
  - No: The left example is correct, the right one isn't — it won't work
  - *Wait* is used to wait for an expression to become TRUE
    - the expression eventually becomes TRUE because a variable in the expression is changed by <u>another</u> process
  - *While* is used in the normal programming sense
    - in the case shown, if the expression is TRUE, the simulator will continuously execute the loop. Another process will never have the chance to change "in". <u>Infinite loop!</u>
    - while can't be used to wait for a change on an input to the process. Need other variable in loop, or # or @ in loop.

```
module yes (in, ...);
input     in;
...
          wait (in == 1);
          ...
endmodule
```

```
module no (in, ...);
input     in;
...
          while (in != 1);
          ...
endmodule
```

Blocking procedural assignments and

- We've seen **blocking assignments** — they use =
  - Options for specifying delay

```
#10 a = b + c;
a = #10 b + c;
```

The difference?

  - The differences:

Note the action of the second one:

- an *intra-assignment* time delay
- execution of the always statement is blocked (suspended) in the middle of the assignment for 10 time units.
- how is this done?

Events — @something

- Action
  - when first encountered, sample the expression
  - wait for expression to change in the indicated fashion
  - This always blocks
- Examples

```
always @(posedge ck)
    q <= d;
```

```
always @(hello or goodbye)
    a = b;
```

```
always @(hello)
    a = b;
```

```
always begin
    yadda = yadda;
    @(posedge hello or negedge goodbye)
    a = b;
    ...
end
```