

Trials and Tribulations of Evaluating Creative Projects

ALEXANDER J. YOUNG

Dalhousie University

Trials and Tribulations of Evaluating Creative Projects

The Problems of evaluation are exponentially increased when the projects to be evaluated are open-ended and unstructured. In many ways, they are analagous to evaluating teaching.

Creative projects must be evaluated on pre-specified criteria. I suggest three which **are** listed in order of importance:

1. Amount of history taught to classmates.
2. Overall quality of the work, the presentation, the effort,
3. Creativity.

Obviously, none of them are quantifiable.

Some common problems with which we must contend are:

1. The very creative entertaining project which doesn't teach.
- I generally grade them C-D.
2. Excellent project in which it is obvious others provide all the skill (bringing in a skilled juggler dressed as a court jester or bringing in pro-dancers to demonstrate historical dances).
- I generally grade them B-C depending on what the student does with the visiting experts.
3. Excellent project - poor presentation
- I generally grade them B-C depending on whether the presentation is so poor that it interferes with class learning.
4. Average project - excellent presentation.
- I generally grade them B.
5. Excellent obvious effort - project a debacle.
- I generally grade them C-D - if A.V. failure I permit them to submit to me later.
6. Excellent project - little effort because student has a long developed skill.
- I generally grade them A.
7. One project done by more than one student.
- An a grade becomes two Bs unless there is enough substance to warrant the amount of credit demanded by the number of grade recipients.

Other prospective problems can be minimized if they can be predicted. Students can be warned that:

1. Students must clean up (after rodeos and pie throwing minstrels etc.)
2. Students will have to change moods quickly.
3. Students are to teach to the class, not the professor.
4. Room big enough for visitors must be arranged.
5. Crudity must be kept to reasonable bounds.
6. All projects must be legal.

The problems are many but the rewards are generally worth it.