

MODELS OF EVALUATING STUDENTS' CREATIVE WORKS BY OTHER STUDENTS

by Menis Theodoridis

This report mainly presents the proposed **methodology** as well as the **standard tools** used to evaluate students' video productions by other students. Teachers are welcome to implement it in various video projects using their own collection of videos.

Students evaluating their classmates' production is a delicate issue. Children's language can be cruel and offensive while their evaluation criteria may be simplistic and naive, originating from the internet culture or popular TV talk shows. This often discourages teachers from inviting students' criticism of other students' works. Such an attitude, however, deprives education of significant opportunities to promote critical thinking in the classroom, as well as to develop higher standards of argumentation and critical discourse. Along these lines, a priority educational aim would be to elaborate on tools and activities that would encourage students' criticism of other students' work in an effective but not confronting way, and to promote the expression of opinions based on criteria and reasoning commonly agreed to beforehand. To serve such an educational aim, we have designed and implemented a standardized evaluation procedure where students' video productions had been evaluated by other students.

To achieve the required evaluation context, certain methodological decisions were necessary:

- A **fixed collection** of student video productions needed to be chosen. These were the works "to be evaluated". Through some process of distribution and sharing, all these videos were accessible to all participating students.
- All videos in the collection had to be somehow equivalent and comparable. In other words, to have a common theme **allowing comparisons** between videos (in our case, all videos were recordings of youth culture as perceived by the students of six schools in the greater Athens, Greece, area and six schools in the greater Istanbul, Turkey, area. Also all 12 videos had been produced within the same Erasmus Plus project)¹. Moving away from our case, other collections of videos could be arranged: videos around a common social or environmental theme, films which are examples of a certain genre or kind (e.g., documentaries, different kinds of fiction, animation etc.), films constituting examples of a certain film artist-creator, or a particular cinema school etc. In general, a crucial methodological decision would be to found the evaluation process on successive comparisons.
- Student evaluations had to be **collective**. After screening all the videos, students, divided in small groups of 3-4, had to discuss and collectively evaluate each video using a standard evaluation form. In another similar activity, the standard evaluation form for each video had to express the opinion of the whole class, which allowed comparisons between collective opinions of a number of school classes evaluating the same video.
- The evaluation sheet had been designed in an objective (multiple choice) way requiring **minimum writing skills**, but at the same time allowing clear-cut distinctions according to evaluation criteria specifically chosen to initiate in-group argumentation.

During the two years of the project's implementation, two distinct evaluation procedures have been tried, each focusing on different aspects of developing students' critical thinking skills:

¹ YOUTHDOC

1. During the first year of implementation, a more refined and time consuming form was used, requiring each video's evaluation by the class as a whole. After viewing each video, students had to agree by choosing from a list of proposed phrases or adjectives, the ones that -in their opinion- were the most suitable to characterize the video. The form (Appendix I) was divided in four specific dimensions, proposing a wide range of phrases or adjectives that could characterize each video in each particular dimension:

- 1.1. the degree to which, each particular video actually presented aspects of the **youth culture** (*"the particular video can be viewed as a recording of characteristic places, behaviors, ways of thinking, ways of speaking and social context related to youth culture"*).
- 1.2. the degree to which each video presented a specific, identifiable issue in an explicit and structured way (*"**clarity of statements**, consistency, true representation of young people, clear narrative"*)
- 1.3. the degree to which each video **integrated documents** supporting its arguments and providing evidence for further sociological discourse (*"direct or indirect inclusion of original documents such as original stories, interviews, original words of interviewees, press or TV extracts, legal texts, photos, popular songs, etc. in the narration"*). It should be noted that this dimension is very particular to the YouthDocs Project. Other video evaluation projects may not include such a dimension at all.
- 1.4. The degree to which each video had achieved an overall adequate level of cinematic expression and **cinema language** (*"quality of photography, framing, camera movements, editing and rhythm, creative use of sound, convincing acting, etc., creating an artistic presentation as a whole"*)

For each of the above dimensions, all students of the evaluating class had to collectively agree and encircle the qualities that best described the particular video. As a result, one evaluation form was collected from each class for each video. It should be noted that, as the proposed qualities represented a wide range of degrees of choices, a lot of critical discussions were triggered, involving students in creative argumentation. As there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, a classical pedagogic principle applies here: the process of argumentation and decision-making is pedagogically more significant than the decision itself.

As explained above, in the present paper, no discussion of the evaluation results will be presented. However, for the sake of clarifying the kind of tendencies that have emerged, it would be worth mentioning that during the First Year evaluation of the student videos, it became apparent that students from Turkish schools were more generous in their evaluations (i.e., not hesitant to encircle very positive phrases), while students from Greek schools were more strict and reserved in evaluating both the Greek and the Turkish videos.

A final comment regarding this type of evaluation is that, to formulate some conclusive statistically reliable results -especially if many schools participate in the project- a tremendous amount of work is required to process the evaluation forms. However, since such a methodology allows the students to develop more refined argumentation skills, it is recommended as a valuable evaluation tool in the hands of a classroom teacher.

2. During the Second Year of the Project's implementation a less refined procedure was adopted, but which -nevertheless- allowed the development and use of a digital platform that recorded evaluation by small student groups of 3-4 on three basic criteria through online voting. The most interesting advantage of this procedure is that it invites the participation of numerous groups of students in a kind of virtual film festival, the results of which are immediately

accessible in the form of dynamic tables, potentially raising further discourse. The most determining methodological characteristics of this Second Year implementation are:

- 2.1. The argumentation process was confined to a **small group level** (3-4 students) rather than on a classroom level. In other words, **all** students in a classroom were divided in small groups expressing their opinions through their group's vote. Although each classroom's results were digitally added and presented, active discussions took place only within each small voting group.
- 2.2. The questions to be addressed by each small group were three:
 - 2.2.1. *Which one of the 12 videos would our group choose to show to a friend?*
 - 2.2.2. *Which one of the 12 videos would our group choose to show to our parents?*
 - 2.2.3. *Which one of the 12 videos would be the most weird video and the one that we would like to discuss further?*

Once it was clear to the students what they were expected to do, the 12 videos were directly compared according to each distinct criterion:

- (2.2.1) choosing *a video to show to a friend* reveals personal preference and is similar to choosing "the video I like best". Usually it is the question generating most discussions.
- (2.2.2) choosing *a video to show to our parents* denotes a more "objective" criterion that refers to socially acceptable behaviors. Often students' personal conformity is easily expressed and admitted in this answer.
- (2.2.3) choosing *the most weird video* provides students an opportunity to build a positive attitude towards a work that they would normally reject because they didn't understand it or it conflicts with their personal aesthetical norms. When answering this question, they usually would **not** choose a work that they would otherwise evaluate as naive, superficial or badly made, the implication being that this video was not poor but "different".

2.3. After screening all 12 videos in the school's cultural events hall, the student audience which had already been divided into small groups of 3-4 students, discussed and argued their group's final choices regarding the three questions of the voting form (Appendix II) as explained above. As soon as each group came to a consensus, the three answers agreed upon were digitally submitted to the voting platform. Students could then be immediately informed online about the total voting results in the form of graphic representations (Appendix III). These **graphic representations of all the groups' votes** allowed further discussions about how each school voted, how the whole student community of each country voted, etc. In fact, the degree, to which such discussions might take place, mostly relied on the teachers in each school. Links and emails of the participating schools on the platform would even allow communication between schools.

2.4. Given the structure of the voting forms and the procedure for digital voting, all discussions between students occur only as verbal communication-expression. To provide a further opportunity for written communication-expression, an extra activity called **Written Review** (APPENTIX IV) has been included on the platform. For students who would like to write a review about any one of the 12 videos screened, an elementary guide is available there. Such reviews could be uploaded on the school's site and further discussed by the students in each school.

3. To complete an overview of as many as possible methodological alternatives regarding ways of evaluating student productions, we have also included here one model of evaluation applied in live Videomuseum Festivals. This was part of a similar project called Videomuseum videos

(2008-2015), which could be characterized as the predecessor of the present YouthDocs Project.² Student videos were presented annually in a **live Festival** where the student audience consisted, more or less, of all students that had participated in the production of the screened videos. Just before entering the screening hall, each participating school would nominate two students for the formation of two evaluation committees: one student to represent the school in evaluation committee [A] and one student who would represent their school in evaluation committee [B]. A third evaluation committee [C] was formed, consisting of 3-4 teachers and 2-3 invited guests (usually media experts). The three parallel committees took their places in the screening hall separately from each other and from the rest of the audience.

After viewing each video, each member of each committee had to rate the particular video on a scale of 1-10 representing the evaluator's overall impression (10 being the maximum positive evaluation). At the end of the screening each committee summed up the ratings of its members and announced the three videos that received the highest scores. Thus, three videos (out of the many screened) were chosen by committee [A], three videos by committee [B] and three by committee [C]. In some cases, the videos chosen by the three parallel committees overlapped, while in others, a distinct discrepancy between the choices of the three committees occurred. This triggered further discussions between students in the audience who obviously had formed their own preferences according to their personal criteria. Again, as there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, a classical pedagogic principle applied: the process of argumentation and decision-making is pedagogically more significant than the decision itself.

There was much emphasis given to the fact that the **criteria of the committees are usually circumstantial** and that -although we fully respect the committees' awards for the sake of the procedure- their choices should be regarded as having relative value. This critical attitude of the committees' awards released students' tension of hoping to get "a distinction" (having in mind that the audience consisted of students who created the videos) while, nevertheless, kept the fun of the "game" going.

As was explained, this report is limited only to the methodology and tools strictly referring to activities of evaluation by students. Teachers may also consider a variety of reflective activities that can function as a valuable tool of developing non-verbal criteria. Such activities for example can be, each group of students in the audience could choose a particular moment of the video just viewed and compose "an image of frozen bodies" on stage, or to give a sentence-title to the video or to mumble a short melody inspired by the video, etc. These reflective-projective activities, however, are the object of drama specialists and animators. The focus of the present paper, was on three different methods for evaluating students' creative works by other students: the use of multiple choice phrases to characterize each piece of work in different dimensions (YouthDocs implementation, Year1), the use of a digital voting platform with three questions to be collectively answered by small groups of students (YouthDocs implementation, Year2), the use of three parallel evaluation committees in the screening hall during a live Festival (VideoMuseums implementation 2008-2015).

In conclusion, the concept of a collectively accepted "game" of evaluation enhances the development of students' critical reasoning and establishes the awareness of an "active audience". Modifying the above models, teachers can encourage similar activities of

² VIDEOMUSEUM

argumentation, expression of opinions and communication within most areas of the school curriculum.

APPENDIX I

YouthDocs video

recording critical glances on personal identity, youth culture and contemporary reality



Erasmus+

2014-2016 Erasmus+/KA2 Project Code: 2014-1- EL01-KA201-001545

Evaluation Criteria for Student Video Productions-Year 1

Title of video:

Each video will be evaluated in the following dimensions: (according to your evaluation, please circle any phrase that suits your view)

1. Recording of Youth Culture (this video can be viewed as a recording of characteristic places, behaviors, ways of thinking, ways of speaking, style and appearance, artistic expression, politics, ideas and social context related to youth culture):

just a little bit

to some extent

to a high degree

2. Content - Structure (clarity of statements, consistency, true representation of young people, clear narrative):

simplistic-linear-naïve

superficial

decent

vague

full of stereotypic preaching (elders' talk)

lacks clarity of statements

understandable presentation of youth issues

touches upon many social issues not showing how these affect young people

clever, clearly presented arguments

original-creative-honest

structured around one main issue which is thoroughly presented

3. Use of documents to support arguments (direct or indirect inclusion of original documents such as original stories, interviews, original words of interviewees, press or TV extracts, legal texts, photos, popular songs, etc. in the narration)

too many confusing documents

no documents

use of relevant documents in a direct way, not blending in the narration

use of irrelevant documents

clever use of documents implying critical viewing of the narration

4. Artistic expression: Use of cinema language in video narrations (quality of photography, framing, camera movements, editing and rhythm, creative use of sound, convincing acting etc. creating an artistic presentation as a whole)

tiring-boring

decent presentation

adequate presentation

attractive-fascinating presentation

inadequate presentation



...in our own view

a Virtual Festival interactive Platform for the evaluation of YouthDocs Student Videos by other students

HOME ORGANIZING YOUR SCREENING COMMUNICATING BETWEEN SCHOOLS MODIFYING THE PLATFORM FORUM

OUR GROUP VOTES:

Please select only one video in each column
 The one video we would choose **"to show to a friend"**
 The one video we would choose **"to show to our parents"**
 The **"most weird"** video that we would like to discuss further

- EDUCATOR LOGIN
- THE VIDEOS
- VOTING
- RESULTS
- WRITTEN REVIEWS



	Show to a Friend	Most "Weird"	Show to our Parents
"Trapped in cyber world" 3rd Gymnasio Acharnon, Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Scetching our Future" 12th Gymnasio Acharnon, Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The black book" Gymnasio Kerateas, Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"A day in the classroom" 3rd Gymnasio Geraka, Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Enough" Geniko Lykeio Varis, Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Bad influences" 5th Gymnasio Acharnon, Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"FIBU" Ataturk, Turkey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Anxiety" TCMB, Turkey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Talking Desks" Mobil IHO, Turkey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Voting Code:



Still no votes for today!

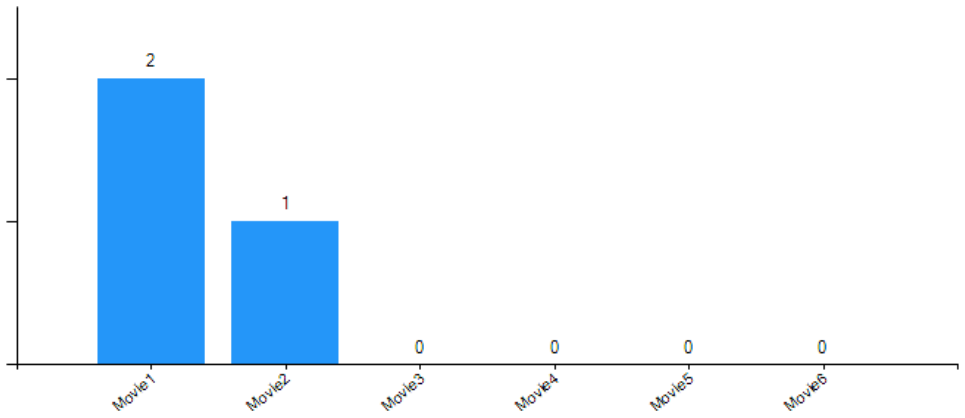
HOME ORGANIZING YOUR SCREENING COMMUNICATING BETWEEN SCHOOLS MODIFYING THE PLATFORM FORUM

- EDUCATOR LOGIN
- THE VIDEOS
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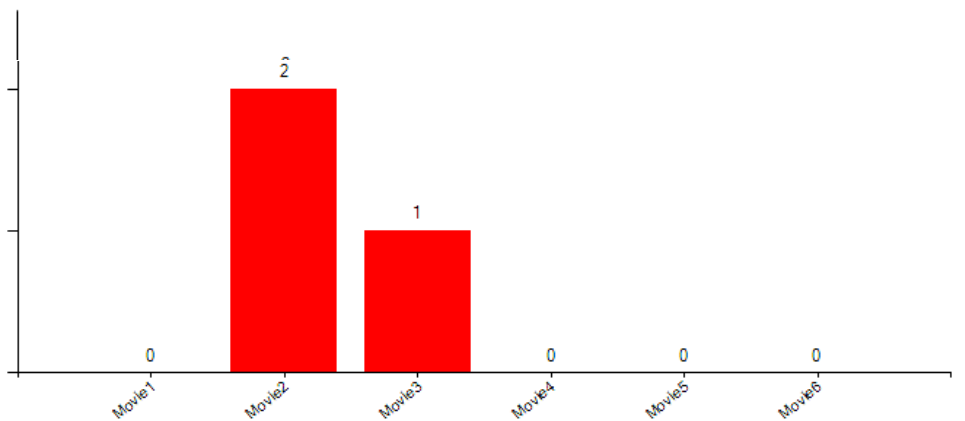
Results Type

Total

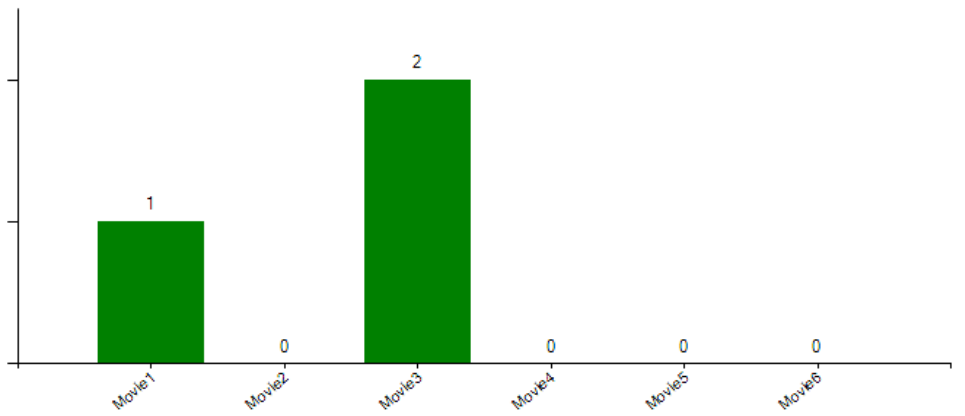
Best Movie



Most Weird



For the Parents



Why I liked this video very much, or Why ... I didn't like it at all!³

This is an activity primarily for Secondary school students.

Students can participate either individually or as a group. Written reviews can only be submitted for discussion in your school. If the school agrees to invite open discussions of reviews, the written review texts can be uploaded on your school's site.

All videos in this festival are student productions. Each video presents moments from their daily life that a group of students chose to show us.

Some of the videos have been created to show actual events as they happened in reality and thus have a strong documentary character, while others have been created as stage plays ("docu-drama"). Then, these plays were shot and made into short videos so that all students could view them. It should be remembered however that none of the videos tell us an imaginary story; rather, they record and present real situations around us, always through the creator's personal view of the world we live in.

Writing a review on a film we don't simply try to put forward our own opinion about the film, but we also try to answer questions that could be asked by anyone in the audience who is watching the film. For each film, numerous questions could be asked and each of us might give his/her own answers.

Mainly we try to include information/answer:

1. The film's identity:

What is the title of the film? How long is the film (duration)? When was it produced? In which school? By students of which grade?

2. Issues discussed in the film:

- In your opinion, what is the main subject that these students want to discuss in their film and what do they tell us about it? Are they clear and convincing enough in showing us what they wanted?
- What do we think about this subject? Does this subject concern us as well? Do we agree in the way that the filmmakers present their subject or would we view it in a different way? Is there something important which -in our own view- we feel that the film didn't include?
- Are there any side-subjects discussed in this film? Do we have any remarks of our own about any of these side-subjects?

3. Film language:

- What is our impression of the way the film 'shows us' its subject? Does it remind us of life and reality in the same way that we usually experience it? Or perhaps did the filmmakers choose to guide our imagination to look at reality in a somehow different and unusual/weird way?
- What is our impression of the film's characters? Are they convincing enough? Do they look like us?
- What is the film's tempo? Is it fast or slow? Is it joyful and rhythmic? Or, perhaps, is it sad and distant? Is this tempo suitable to the film's subject?
- Would we make any comment about the music of the film?

³ M. Theodoridis, J. Bakoyannopoulos, Guide for writing a film review by students.

- Does this film resemble the films we usually watch, or is it somehow different? Can we describe how this film is different than most? Or, perhaps, did we notice some characteristics that make this film very similar to the films we usually watch.
- Were there any unforgettable moments in the film, or any moments that we will remember for a long time?
- Does this film mostly resemble to a type of journal article that one would read in a newspaper? Or is it more like some thoughts and ideas we would share with a friend? Is it like a story, or perhaps, even a poem or a song?

4. Overall impression:

Did we like this film? Was it honest? Was it clear? Did the film raise some questions that will stay with us for quite a few days? Did it remind us any of our own experiences? Overall, what kind of feelings did it create in us while watching it? Optimism? Pessimism? Unrest? Trust in something? Anger? Irony about something? Something else?

As we said at the beginning, there are numerous questions that can be asked about each film. We often wonder how the filmmakers themselves would answer them. But they usually say "all that we wanted to say, we have said in our film. Now you tell us what you understood from it"! For this reason, a well written review can only be written by a very careful reviewer. He/She will provide the answers that -in his/her own opinion- have been put forward by the film.

This does not necessarily mean that there can be answers to all questions asked. For each film, but also for each reviewer, some questions seem to fit and elicit very interesting answers, while other questions may not make any sense and should be disregarded. Especially when there is a word limit for the length of the review -as is the case in our contest- out of the many questions listed above, the reviewer should consider the ones that best allow him/her to express a well thought out opinion.

To write a fair review responsibly, watching the film once is not enough; it is advisable to carefully view it for a second time.

- In our activity your text can vary between 300-900 words (this present guide is about 900 words long).
- Each student or group of students can submit a review on only one of the 12 videos.
- Each text submitted should also include the student's name, grade and his/her school ID.

And don't forget:

A review is not reflecting the filmmaker's opinion, but rather the opinion and views of its writer!

Have fun and enjoy participating!