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up to the ideas and perspectives of other individuals, so that they might enrich their own understanding of human existence and their consequent ability to work easily and profitably with others. To foster this aspect of education we would need to focus on my second evaluative criterion of emphasizing the student's ability to enter into and utilize the positions of others.

A third key aspect of education is its ongoing and cumulative nature, by means of which the student continues to grow and communicate long after he or she leaves the classroom. We must therefore be careful to foster rather than to cut off this growth and communication, to cultivate rather than kill the interest of the student. To do this, we would need to emphasize my fourth criterion of evaluation, effort expended and work produced.

My understanding of the nature of philosophy grows out of this understanding of education: philosophy (broadly) as the elaboration and evaluation of ways of living. In its elaborative aspect, philosophy seeks to explore and understand the possible modes of interpretation of existence. In its more critical aspect, philosophy attempts to evaluate those modes.

To foster both the elaborative and evaluative aspects of philosophy in the student, we would need to emphasize both the second and the third evaluative criteria. I.e., the student ought to be familiar with and able to function within the perspectives of several key thinkers as well as to present his or her own views forcefully. The fourth criterion, effort expended and work produced, similarly must be considered within the context of the student's attempts to elaborate and evaluate positions which reflect his or her own interests and concerns.

Now, there surely will be disagreement as to the accuracy and worth of my remarks in this section, as there may even be with regard to my whole endeavor. Suppose, however, that we consider such a disagreement to be an instance of what is encountered with the application of the initial criterion: agreement with the instructor's ideas. Let us "grade" the paragraphs of this section in terms of their agreement with our own understanding of education and philosophy.

The power of the first evaluative criterion, agreement with the instructor's ideas, can be easily grasped by the reader's "grading" of my remarks thus far. Did not you, the reader, almost intuitively either agree or disagree with the views about education and philosophy that I

suggested above?

More importantly, note the extent to which this agreement or disagreement persists despite one's efforts to dispel it. It is for precisely this reason (and not simply to avoid criticism of my own position!) that I suggest that we ought to use my first evaluative criterion (agreement with instructor's position) as little as possible. Complete divorce from that part of us which itself holds positions is probably not possible, especially when the question is as important as the future welfare of our own students. However, something like a complete divorce is desirable. We must at least aim at neutrality in grading.

VI

At this point, I want to offer an example of how I grade philosophy essays and papers, using as my context an introductory course which examines different perspectives on human nature. In this course, I try to structure the paper assignments and the examination questions around some particular event or situation which offers several modes of interpretation.

For example, in a unit which compares and contrasts the thought of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, an incident I might choose would be an apparently "senseless" murder. For the assignment, I ask the students to write a five-page paper consisting of three components. The first of these is an explanation of how an investigator of a generally Marxist persuasion might approach the incident. What assumptions would he or she bring to the investigation? What "facts" would become "evidence?" What hypotheses would be offered as explanation? What possibilities might exist for the murderer and for society in general? The second component of the paper is to answer these questions again, this time from a Freudian approach. Together, these components comprise about two-thirds of the paper and are worth about two-thirds of the grade.

The final aspect of this type of assignment is for the student to examine critically what he or she has just recorded. How adequate were these perspectives as explanations of the situation? What aspects of the situation did each lay open? What aspects were concealed? Were the advantages and disadvantages of the particular perspective the result of the perspective itself or of the problem with which I confronted the students? How would the student explain the incident? How much do the authors in question contribute to the

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student's own understanding? Why? What else does the student consider vital?

This type of philosophy paper has several advantages. It strikes a balance between the degree of structure necessary to get an assignment done and the degree of freedom necessary to make the doing of that assignment interesting. It also strikes a balance between the life of the classroom and study-carrel and that of the wider world. With regard specifically to our constellation of the four evaluative criteria, this type of philosophy paper emphasizes those aspects which seem most important and downplays the others.

For example, with regard to the second criterion of demonstrating familiarity with the course material, the student is required to examine a situation from within a pair of perspectives to which he or she may have just been introduced and then to attempt to set out a full and adequate interpretation of the situation from the viewpoint of each. With regard to the third criterion of being able to present his or her position, in doing this type of paper the student is required to evaluate the perspectives he or she has just presented as adequate explanations of the situation and then to develop his or her own understanding of the situation. The fourth criterion, the amount of work performed, though admittedly of lesser importance, can still be put to some use. For example, it is possible to reward somewhat a student who had little to offer of his or her own for the diligence to hunt down and cite the proper passage to back up a point, or to downgrade somewhat student who seems to know almost everything except how to spell. Perhaps most importantly, the initial criterion of agreement with the instructor's position is almost completely eliminated from consideration.

VII

I began this discussion with the enumeration of three aspects of grading philosophy papers which I take to be problematic. Grading is, first of all, insufficiently precise: we have to separate papers with fairly continuous levels of merit into distinct grade-groupings which are thought to have constancy through time. I have not examined this question at all, except to say that the other two problems are initially more severe. The second problematic aspect of grading papers is that our grading possesses an inherent degree of arbitrariness to the extent to which we fail to publicize

and adhere to a strict set of evaluative criteria in each grading situation. The third problematic aspect is the most significant: we need to justify the evaluative criteria we use, and their interrelation and relative strengths, in terms of some standard which is more or less objective.

Has such a standard been found in the examination of the nature of education and philosophy? Certainly not, if we take 'objective' to imply entailing the agreement of all philosophy teachers. Even on this approach, different evaluators will feel different strengths and lacks in their society and in their students, and these differences will generate different constellations of the four evaluative criteria. But, these different constellations of criteria might *all* be justifiable if the evaluators can demonstrate how, by means of satisfying them, students can become better. If we can indicate to our students the nature of the standard we use to justify our evaluative criteria—or, with our more advanced students, if we can mutually derive the standard which we are to be using—and if we can create examination procedures and suggest paper topics which enable the students to demonstrate how well they can satisfy the criteria, we may be better able to foster their future as self-conscious inquirers.

When I approach grading papers in this way—recognizing that I have the students working on certain necessary skills in their papers which need to be developed, recognizing that I make use of a constellation of criteria with which the students are familiar, and recognizing that I cannot do more than ordinarily rank papers and impose grade distinctions somewhere—I am still uncomfortable with grading. And, when grading philosophy papers, a certain amount of residual discomfort is probably a good thing. Such discomfort keeps the questions of the arbitrariness of grading and the justifiability of criteria alive. Such discomfort also serves another purpose: that of increased attention to execution. I can never be complacent because there remains the practical problem that each time I face a new paper I may do a poor job of evaluating it. Each time I must instantiate these theoretical considerations, and this instantiation requires vigilance.

This paper is an expanded version of a paper presented at the Third International Workshop/Conference on Teaching

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