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*Semester Project: A Community Affair*

Many of you include semester projects as part of your course (s). For example, instead or in addition to taking a final exam at the end of the semester, faculty have designed their course (s) so that student present projects that demonstrate a conceptual understanding of a complex set of ideas that have been discussed and covered during the semester. The best of these projects are associated with well thought out learning outcomes, and assessed in ways that are both formative and summative. Students and teachers tend to really like these kinds of projects and the option of demonstrating knowledge in ways that are different and perhaps more fulfilling to them than other ways such as exams. But here is the catch. Even when students demonstrate acceptable learning and enthusiasm through the semester project activity, they may not be getting the full value out of such an activity.

Teachers can help students achieve a greater level of learning and success in such projects by:

- Having students present their projects to real audiences who will give critical and helpful feedback
- Inviting guests such as students and faculty from throughout your department and across campus to serve as an audience for student presentations.
- Inviting guests from outside the BGSU community to serve as an audience for student presentations.

Real audiences have the potential to represent authentic learning environments where students are responsible for performing not just for a grade, but also for a real purpose and valuable feedback. Additionally, by inviting colleagues (including administrators and staff) and student peers to come to the student presentations, you are opening up the door of your classrooms to show both your guests and your students that such projects, and teaching have real value—and that student learning is more than just the average of test scores.