Verbal communication is as essential in the architectural profession as graphic communication. What follows is a sample question and several responses, with the evaluation of each response. These examples could be for any type of short writing assignment, whether a short answer question on an examination or other assignment in the architectural technology program. For the purposes of comparison, the evaluations use a maximum possible score of 10 points for the answer.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

How is the Architectural Profession meeting the challenges of current issues in professional practice?

Response No. 1:
Architects today are making very sure that they do the right things to insure that they will have enough work to do in the coming years.

Evaluation of Response No. 1:
GRADE: R 1 or 2 out of 10 pts.
REMARKS: Anyone off the street could write this answer to the question.
Response No. 2:
Name branding can have a two-way street. While a “good” architect can make a signature or trophy building. If an architect gets hooked with a bad developer he could get a bad name. Robert Gutman the public trust is being undermined from architects work with big corporations. The lose trust in architects when they hear about code violations. Building uses don’t trust use because were the one’s they usual blame. Most problems have nothengoing to do with building design. It’s usually a combination of the builders and owners.

Evaluation of Response No. 2:
GRADE: R 0 out of 10 pts.
REMARKS: Sentence structure and spelling are so poor that no clarity of thought is conveyed. Some statements are incorrect, opinions unsupported by factual evidence are presented. { This is a verbatim response from an exam question.

Response No. 3:
They are fitting the unqualified people who want to take jobs away making sure that only the right registered people are allowed to do the architect work. Also there are much things only architects can do and others cannot, so always there will be work. Also two are finding ways of improving services to clients and oners by finding ways of providing more services and being better run financial wise.

Evaluation of Response No. 3:
GRADE: “D” 3 out of 10 pts.
REMARKS: Gives evidence of having read and comprehended major points of the topic. However, these ideas are not expressed clearly, concisely, and uses embarrassingly unprofessional level of grammar and spelling.
Response No. 4:
Architects are faced with many others who would like to do what they do but do not have as much education and right experience. So licensing and stuff is important. The type of background architects have is not like any other engineering or design profession, so there will always there will be things to do that only architects really can do right. Types of architect companies are evolving to develop right combination of people or partnering up with another architect to increase there depth of expertise.

Evaluation of Response No. 4:
GRADE: C 5-6 out of 10 pts.
REMARKS: Gives evidence of having read and comprehended the major points, but these are discussed too generally. The answer lacks specific detail and use of “professional vocabulary”. The style of writing is informal and colloquial, not concise, clear, or professional. There is occasional use of incomplete sentences.

Response No. 5:
The background in education and experience for an architect has unique features not shared by other engineering or design professionals. This prepares only the architect to have the ability to understand, evaluate, integrate, and supervise both the aesthetic and technical components of a building project. For this reason, the “generalist’s” services of the architect will always be a crucial component of the building process. New strategies currently are being increasingly employed by architectural firms to expand the expertise in services they can offer to a client.

Evaluation of Response No. 5:
GRADE: B 7-8 out of 10 pts.
REMARKS: Gives evidence of having read and comprehended major points, but is not comprehensive. The answer needs a little more breadth in its discussion, and could be supported by illustrative examples.
Response No. 6:
The background in education and experience for an architect has unique features not shared by other engineering or design professionals. This prepares only the architect to have the ability to understand, evaluate, integrate, and supervise both the aesthetic and technical components of a building project. For this reason, the “generalist’s” services of the architect will always be a crucial component of the building process. Two strategies currently are being increasingly employed by architectural firms to expand the expertise in services they can offer to a client. One is to develop large multi-disciplinary firms with all engineering services included, the other is to do joint venture projects with other architect’s which can combine the individual strengths of two firms. In addition, architectural firms are increasing their expertise in practical business strategies, such as identifying markets and how to promote their company within these markets. For all these reasons, even though many consulting professionals, such as construction managers, interior designers, and engineers are increasing their push into areas traditionally exclusively reserved for architects, the architectural profession will be able to hold its own.

Evaluation of Response No. 6:
GRADE: A
9-10 out of 10 pts.
REMARKS: Evidence of having read, comprehended, and included a majority of major points of topic. There is use of specific examples or detail to support general statements. The vocabulary uses correct professional terminology, and not layman’s manner of describing the same topic. Sentence structure and other grammatical issues are reasonably correct.
GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

The criteria for evaluating a written essay-type exam answer may vary somewhat from one academic discipline to another. Therefore, the criterion listed below should not be interpreted as being universal for all college courses. The major concerns in an engineering technology course are the design concepts and the technical material of the course. The following criteria reflect this focus:

- **Accuracy** - Is information factually accurate?

- **Information versus Opinions** - Is the question asking for factual information or the student's observations or opinions? Questions asking for factual information should have responses based in the facts requested. Opinions and observations are appropriate responses to questions soliciting more general answers; however, the student should support their opinions and observations with factual information.

- **Generic versus Specific Answers** - To what degree does the answer demonstrate that the student has comprehended the subject area of the question? The more specifically the student can express themselves in the answer will demonstrate that the student has increased their knowledge of the subject area beyond that of mere general knowledge.

- **Breadth of Response** - How much information has the student included in the answer to the question? In a question worth more than just a few points, it is probable that the instructor is looking for a quantity of information in the subject area. Therefore, to include many different points in the answer is important.

- **Terminology: Layman vs. Professional** - Can the student use the professional terminology of the technical discipline? It is important to demonstrate a knowledge of the terminology studied in the course in written answers, instead of expressing an idea as an ordinary person.

- **Grammar, Punctuation, & Spelling** - Can the student use the written language at a level of competency expected in professional practice?
RESOURCES:

The Blue Book: A Student’s Guide to Essay Exams,
by Gregory S. Galica
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich; 1991

Notes: