Helping Students Understand, or Why Remembering Isn’t Understanding

Don’t make the mistake of confusing remembering with understanding, and don’t take it for granted that students understand the content or reading that you’ve assigned.

Here’s how: ask students to brainstorm in groups what they remember about a lesson, a reading, or a topic. Then ask the groups to report out on what they remember so that entire class can use collective remembering to move towards understanding. In lower level courses with many new students, this may be a significant amount of what you do in class. Understanding is built upon remembering, so when students work together to expand what they remember about something, they are building a stronger foundation for later understanding.

Once remembering has been established, kick things up a notch and move the groups into understanding tasks using task verbs like these: explain, outline, summarize, compare, illustrate, rephrase, or show.

In the next The Practical Professor: Reflective Practice Series #3
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The Top 10…

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No. 14 – Helping Students Stay the Journey
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No. 16 – Resources for Learning and Teaching
No. 17 – Create a Memorable AND Functional Syllabus
No. 18 – Ways to Build Your Students’ Self-Efficacy
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