

The Practical Professor

No. 10

Quick and easy tips, questions, and suggestions for improving teaching and learning.

Helping Students Understand, or Why Remembering Isn't Understanding

Teaching Tip Series #3

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*

Also available!

Teaching

A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty

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