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Thoughts on “Just Scoring Points”

The idea of comparing education with other metaphors such as building an edifice, house or whatever building we wanted to build, is very interesting. I agree with him that we need to remember our previous knowledge in order to advance further in education or career, just like bricks in a building, and not remembering things after taking a test or quiz is violating that rule. He gave a better metaphor based on his observation after that, which can represent the education that students have even better: sport. I completely agree with him that most of the time in the current education, students simply want to get the most possible points in every test/quiz, and strategize to get more points in future exams. Instead of trying to learn the topic, they are more likely to remember keywords, make notes and try to get a good score in the test. This can get the students a good grade but remains little to no knowledge after college.

He proves his argument by showing his observation that most students that learned basic courses in middle school, high school or college remember little to nothing of that information. Even if some students remembered and were able to explain some keywords, they were hardly able to explain them further. He mentions that it is easy for the adults to blame this on the students lack of understanding, however the core problem might be on the instructor. He explained that most professors assume that the students have solid foundations from previous courses when no one encourages long-term memory. Most professors focus on the newly discovered/invented ideas because it is new and interesting, without realizing that most students don't remember the basic knowledge of the subject. He mentions how a lot of students ask about whether the newly

introduced topic would be on the test, it is easy to see that the students' goal is to increase their grades, not learning about the topic itself.

He did a little experiment where he explained a concept, then had a pop quiz for the next lecture about that concept, but only 25% of the class got it. Then he repeated that for a few times and the percentage of students getting that right increased. He also says that in his more advanced classes, the entire class remembered the concept at the 4th iteration of the quiz. He met a student who treats education like the building metaphor once in a while, but most students treat education as the sport metaphor, so getting high grades in a class does not mean that the student remembers materials from that class. The reason for this behavior in his opinion is because the world rewards students for getting good grades, such as getting the degree for a good job, or getting scholarships to reduce the weight of tuition. I agree with him entirely about this point. I think it is true that most students focused on getting good grades because they wanted the degree for a job more than actually learning about things they do not care about.

He gave ideas about how to make the system rewards students that understand the topic rather than just remember them for a test then forget it later. He suggested making the class more engaging and replacing multiple choice exams with essays. The idea I agreed with the most is his last option: increase the integration of the curriculum. This idea would make the students remember concepts from previous courses more as well as showing that not everything they learned is useless and it would make the student more likely to remember them.

His recent attempt to try to change his students' educational metaphor and the result gave him hope that it is possible, but not easy. By giving short quiz before lectures and asking students to explain in full sentences then explain to them if they could not, the class atmosphere is friendly, students talk with their peers more and less absent, however, he covered less material than he

should have. In the end, most students improved and some improved greatly. I agree with his way of teaching even if it covered less material, because if the students remembered all the concepts he covered, it means a lot more than forgetting the extra materials that other teachers would have taught. I also like his idea of changing the students' minds about their educational metaphor so they would look for an education instead of just a degree.