

Bums In Seats

(A Professorial-Pedagogical Alphabet)

“Better a low attendance for the right reasons than a high attendance for the wrong ones.”

‘A’ is for awakening, with consciousness growing
No matter the subject or object of knowing.
The best will attend when their views become shifted
And the rest take note with spirits thus lifted.

‘B’ is for ‘bell’ – the curve of despair,
Where students lose hope and profs cease to care.
Students might come for fear of a ‘C’,
But learning’s corrupt when forced and not free.

‘C’ is for curious – a state to be sought
In students who come and want to be taught.
A natural state that’s allowed to unfold,
Curiosity flows and is never controlled.

‘D’ is for discussion where voices are heard,
Connections are made and hearts are well stirred.
Engagement occurs when debate plays a part
In the goals of the course and is used from the start.

‘E’ is for example that’s set by the prof,
Whose relation to learning can set people off.
If the prof is engaged and shows it to all,
Attendance will soar and never be small.

‘F’ is for fun where laughter engages.
In learning’s ascent, it’s one of the stages;
For humor and freedom go hand in hand
‘Gainst tyranny’s darkness taking a stand.

(Je suis Charlie!)

‘G’ is for game that all of us play.
To make systems work, we bend to their sway.
Students are bored when each class is the same,
And learning’s reduced to playing a game.

‘H’ is for harmony where connections are made,
Confidence reigns, and none are afraid.
With skills complementary, each plays a part
In a unified class that has its own heart.

‘I’ is for issues inflaming our world
And into engagement by them we are hurled.
Link course material to affairs of the day,
And in terms of attendance students will stay.

‘J’ is for jargon to keep well at bay.
Rather speak plainly whatever you say.
Crushing the class with false erudition
Turns teacher tormentor and learning perdition.

‘K’ is for knowing, and there’s more than one way
For students to get whatever you say.
Knowing has styles that one ought to know
To keep up their interest so learning may flow.

‘L’ is for love, which some profs do seek
Though classroom dynamics go up the creek.
For healthy relations this temptation do spurn.
You’re there to teach and they’re there to learn.

‘M’ is for memorization which most do detest.
For when has it ever brought out the best?
The results do not last. It deadens the soul,
And takes one away from learning’s true goal.

‘N’ is for newness, when teaching’s not stale.
To rely on old notes is often a fail.
Newness gives teaching a fiery flare
And shows to the students how much you do care.

‘O’ is for openness, where students can speak
And the mood of the class is bright and not bleak.
It all comes down to feelings of trust,
Where a class can improve and not be a bust.

‘P’ is for passion, which makes learning one’s love

And links prof to the class like hand to a glove.
Attendance is up when interest is high
And students to lectures will speedily fly.

‘Q’ is for questions – the glue of the class
Where queries ’twixst prof and student do pass.
Teaching’s Socratic but learning is too
When students lob questions on which profs can chew.

‘R’ is for research – a double-edged sword
That cuts to the quick when students are bored..
But with relevant projects offered to each
A student’s engaged and ready to teach.

‘S’ is for safety which must be insured
When lack of respect is a plague to be cured.
Students feel threats from dangerous peers
Where a healthy class is one with no fears.

‘T’ is for telepathy that deals with the doubt
Of what students think but never comes out.
Students feel heard when minds appear read.
With insensitive profs a class can be dead.

‘U’ is for understanding – what all do pursue.
But what does it mean for students and you?
Clarity here is a strategy wise
Where students are helped and attendance does rise.

‘V’ is for vision – a sense of the whole
For every course and class the goal.
If what you teach is a fragmented mass,
Then who will want to come to class?

‘W’ is for wisdom– a quality rare
For which every prof should give a care.
Whether they know it more or less,
Students look for insight in what you profess.

‘X’ stands for the mark that can degrade
And cut students down like a bloody sharp blade.
Beware of marking that does but deride.
Instead please affirm the positive side.

‘Y’ is for youth – most students are growing
No matter their age or level of knowing.
None are so old that they cannot come
To the dawning of truth like a bright morning sun.

‘Z’ is the sound of students who snore,
Something they do when the prof is a bore.
To keep bums in seats and do what you ought
Remember to teach as you would be taught!

Ron Glasberg
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