

Spoon-feeding Students

I completely agree with your judgments, with your opinions about how the misuse of SETs has been destroying the quality of higher education in this country. I have been teaching at American universities since 1998, came to the US in 1991. Before that I was an Assistant/Associate Professor in (East) Germany. I have been teaching Chemistry, Biochemistry, Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences to Medical students in Germany and to Pharmacy students in the US. I feel I am in a unique position to compare two totally different educational systems, the tuition-based system in the US versus the (almost) tuition free system in Europe (though there are tendencies to charge tuition overseas also, I am not quite up-to-date in this respect anymore). I am very frustrated with the low level of education here at US universities, as far as I have personally observed.

We are spoon feeding and entertaining our students in the classroom to an extent which is almost intolerable. Studying textbooks in the library has been replaced by memorizing handouts in the cafeteria. Three years ago I was appointed Chair of my department and during that time I have been trying to get away from the SET scores and comments as much as I can when annually evaluating my faculty. Last year I have denied tenure and promotion to one of my (former) faculty members, who literally gave to the class his/her test questions in advance. He/she has been known at our college for always receiving the highest SET scores. It was not an easy fight for me... but I prevailed.

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