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Teaching the telephone book

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Imagine an English instructor teaching literature and asking the class to read every book ever published. That might have been possible in 1500. Limiting it to a particular subject may have even made it an achievable goal for another two or three centuries. But now? It is no longer possible to ask students to read every book or to memorize every fact we know. Furthermore, changes in technology make the access to knowledge much faster. So why do we still ask students to memorize complete metabolic pathways including all of the intermediates and enzymes?

Cartoon by Elise N. Griswold based on a concept by Daniel J. Klionsky

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