The Lecture Paradox

The Paradox, by LeRoy Kuehl, Ph.D.

Three students on the door did knock;  
With their Professor they would talk.  
He welcomed them most cordially;  
Asked: what could their problem be?  
And in the office of that Saint,  
They laid before him this complaint:  
Your course falls short, you can't deny,  
Since lecture notes you don't supply.  
So all we do while in your class,  
Is take dictation, notes amass.  
Preoccupied with pen and ink,  
We have no time to learn or think.  
Your pearls of wisdom, priceless quotes  
Slip by while we sit taking notes.  
The good Professor promised this,  
That they'd have lecture notes forthwith.  
Six days he toiled and evenings too,  
And when his task was finally through  
Then all his lectures without fail  
Were written up in great detail,  
And basic concepts were defined,  
Because they were all underlined.

Next year the students came to bleat:  
His lecture notes were incomplete.  
For much of what he did expound,  
Could nowhere in the notes be found.  
Although this caused him much chagrin,  
Soon to their braying he gave in,  
and once again without delay  
He wrote down all that he would say.  
And to the old notes this was added--  
His outline now was quite well padded.

When yet another year had passed  
And he thought he'd found peace at last,  
There welled a cry from student throats  
That all he did was read his notes.  
The poor professor paced the hall  
Feeling like a ping-pong ball.

Thus year by year his lectures grew,  
And longer were his outlines too.  
And students found to their distress  
They had to master an excess  
Of obscure facts, minute detail;  
Of information dry and stale.  
A situation that attained  
All because they had complained.  
The moral is easy to observe:  
Students get what they deserve.

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The Solution, by John C. Nemiah, M.D.

The moral of your lines of verse is  
Clear to those who heed them:  
You'll not escape your students' curses  
No matter how you feed them.  
To cast your lectures on deaf ears is  
Folly's height -- debride them!  
The only way you'll find surcease is:  
Let the blighters read them.

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