

You Are Smarter Than You Think! Newsletter

Volume Eleven

Fall 1999

Attrition Rates Are Dropping!

Welcome!

The purpose of this newsletter is to be a forum for ideas that will contribute to the effective use of the **You Are Smarter Than You Think** (YASTYT) program. In the last few weeks I have been talking to nursing administrators throughout the nation. It is clear that attrition rates are on the rise in nursing. I believe the following articles will give you solace in knowing it is not a hopeless battle. I would love to hear about your successes. Please contact me at my address below if you have an experience to share.

In This Issue

- √ Attrition Rates Are Falling Big-time!
- √ One Unit Makes All the Difference, Revisited!
- √ Rote Learning vs Long-term learning
- √ A Story to Inspire

For those who are new to us, this newsletter is free for the asking. For questions, comments, or to be added to the mailing list, call Renée Mollan-Masters at (541) 482-3506 or e-mail: yastyt@mind.net

√ Attrition Rates Are Falling Big-time!

I reported last Spring that Queensborough Community College in New York had wonderful success using the YASTYT program. We knew that attrition rates had been affected but at that printing we didn't know the specifics.

Fortunately Queensborough keeps careful records of their attrition rates. According to their records 85% of the students who used the YASTYT book passed Nursing 101. When the students did not use the YASTYT program, only 50% of them passed. With the YASTYT program, attrition rates were 15% and without the YASTYT program, attrition rates were 50% - a significant 35% drop. According to the Director of Nursing, Maureen Wallace, "There are probably many other variables contributing to these statistics. Still we are very excited about these results!"



I must also inform you of an important correction regarding the article that I wrote in the spring. I mistakenly thought the students at Queensborough Community College were earning a UNIT of credit for their participation in the YASTYT program. The truth is they were given only one POINT of credit. So, if they had a total of 50

points at the end of the term, they actually ended up with 51 points if they participated in the program. This was

however, enough to motivate them. You may think it is too little to make a difference but according Maureen Wallace it made a huge difference.

√ One Unit Makes All the Difference, Revisited!

(I thought it might be helpful if I reprinted this article, with the corrections, which ordinarily appeared in the Spring YASTYT Newsletter. It goes hand-in-hand with the above article.)

How would you like to get 75% of your first-year nursing students

voluntarily using the YASTYT learning system? How would you like to impact your attrition rates so that you aren't losing half of your first semester students? How would you like to do all of this without increasing your current workload?

The nursing program at Queensborough Community College in New York has successfully done this. Last January they offered a one-point six-week class specifically designed to teach students how to apply the YASTYT learning system. Sixty-five individuals (75% of their first semester nursing students) voluntarily participated and although the hard statistics are not yet in, students and teachers alike were very enthusiastic about the class.

How was this accomplished? All incoming nursing students were required to participate in a student orientation, during which they were confronted with the nursing school's attrition rate. They were told frankly that half of them would not be there by next semester. The specifics of why students have so much trouble were discussed and they were shown how certain learning techniques such as rereading the textbook several times, highlighting the text book indiscriminately, and memorizing, etc. will not work in nursing. Then a solution was presented. The students were offered a one-point class that

more effectively and increase their chances for success.

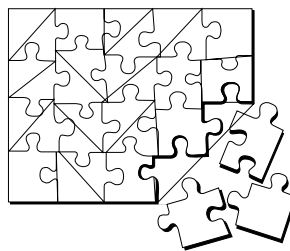
Those students who chose to participate attended a one-hour class for six weeks, facilitated by faculty members who taught the class as a part of their advising responsibilities. The classes had 7 to 14

Success?

"Don't you know it is all about being able to extend love to people? Not in a big, capital-letter sense, but in the everyday sense. Little by little, task by task, gesture by gesture, word by word."
Dotson Rader

students and were scheduled right after lab time when students were already on campus. Attendance was required at every class in order to earn the one-point. The YASTYT book was the required text.

During the first 10 minutes of the weekly meetings, the instructor would ask the students to talk about how things were going. The class would then break down into groups of three or four and work on the Application Journal. At the end of each period, the students would discuss their answers and turn in their finished Application Journal sheets. They were then required to follow through on the assignments given in the Application Journal. The instructor kept a folder on each student which contained their completed work.



Some students took the class even though they felt they didn't need it. Their participation was poor. However, things changed after the first test. Generally the nonparticipating students did not do as well on the test as everyone else in the class. These results got their attention and changed their behavior for the positive.

The benefits from the weekly meetings were far-reaching. The students were able to get extra help with spatial mapping and outlining skills. The students bonded with each other an - important element in student success. At the end of the six weeks, the students were actively involved in deciding which instructors to take the next semester. They weren't looking for the easiest instructor but rather the one who would work well with their particular learning needs. The instructors also learned from the students and came to realize that what they were doing during testing was increasing the students' anxiety. As a result the instructors made changes.

I believe this class was successful for three reasons. First, the students were able to earn one-point of credit. Second, the orientation process showing students why they needed the class increased attendance. Third, the ability of the teachers to use their advising hours for the class increased their commitment to making the project work.

In my opinion this college has found a win win solution by using the YASTYT learning system. In my Fall newsletter I will share with you the specific results. If you would like more information, please contact Maureen Wallace in

the nursing program at Queensborough Community College.

√ Rote Learning vs Long-term Learning

I had an interesting experience this summer. A nursing administrator at Michigan State University told me about one of her students who recently graduated then came back to report that she was not able to pass her nursing boards. All through nursing school this student had gotten good grades but now the boards were asking her to apply the information she had learned. She described her trip through nursing school as simply an exercise in memorizing a movie script. It meant nothing to her.

There is a memory that is NOT long-term memory as I define it but mimics long-term memory. It is rote memory. This is the place where you learn your ABCs and how to count to 100. It is where you memorize. In some people this area is very well developed. They can memorize 101 grocery codes in a very short time. They remember phone numbers without any effort.

Many students today fall in the category of rote memory learners. They may do well on

your tests but they will have great difficulties in the lab and most likely will be unable to pass the boards. This is where

How to Get Free E-mail

A perfect way to use the Application Journal is to combination it with e-mail. E-mail is a wonderful way to create accountability with your students and maintain contact. Some instructors have their students e-mail their Journal activities to them each week. You do not have to always respond to them but when you see someone that needs your attention you can immediately address it and e-mail your student.

E-mail is free to everyone as long as you have access to the Internet. This service is readily available at most schools. Follow the steps below and you and your students will be set up with a personal e-mail address.

Go online.

Go to the following site: www.hotmail.com.

Click the sign-in button.

Fill out the personal information.

Log in your name.

Create a password. Write it down so that if you forget it you can refresh your memory.

You now have a Hotmail email address.

You will need to use it every 90 days to keep it active.

the You Are Smarter Than You Think learning system comes in. Its focus is long-term memory. It is particularly helpful to students who have relied heavily on their rote memory ability which today includes at least 50% of all students and maybe even more. I would bet that most of your students used rote memory to learn anatomy and physiology.

√ A Story to Inspire

A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or

mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100- yard dash. At the gun they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with the relish to run the race to the finish and win. All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and paused. Then they all turned around and went back. Every one of them! One girl with Down's Syndrome bent down and kissed the boy and said, "That will make it better." Then all nine linked arms and walked together to the finish line. Everyone in the stadium stood and the cheering went on for 10 minutes.

This wonderful true story touches us because it demonstrates the true goodness of human nature. As instructors we demonstrate this same goodness more than we realize. I would like to thank you for all that you do. For all the ways you help your students cross the finish line.

Until next time, know that you are appreciated.

