

# You Are Smarter Than You Think! Newsletter

Volume Thirteen

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## A Softer Kinder Approach

### What Direction Are Your Attrition Rates Going In?

This fall the nursing program at Hinds Community College in Mississippi put 100 of their incoming students through the You Are Smarter Than You Think (YASTYT) program. Eighty of these 100 students failed their first test, which was before they had seen the YASTYT book. By the second test, the students were about two-thirds of the way through the YASTYT book and this time only 18 people failed. At the end of the semester, only 12 people actually dropped out; twelve out of 100. What direction are your attrition rates going in?

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For those who are new, 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](mailto:yastyt@mind.net)

### Increase Participation . . . Use A Softer Kinder Approach

Have you ever wondered what motivates people? I have been under the impression for the last few years that fear was the only motivator for students. That is why I instructed all of you to tell your students the truth about how many drop out of your program each year. What I am beginning to discover, however, is that students today are already scared. Telling them how difficult nursing is just freezes them up. That could explain why some of you have low participation numbers in your YASTYT classes.

There is another school in northern Mississippi that tried a different approach this fall with their first semester students and most of these students signed up for the YASTYT Class. Here is what was done. In addition to telling the students honestly

about how difficult nursing is, the instructors also told the students that they wanted them to succeed and had a plan for making that happen.

The plan was presented in a non threatening manner asking the

students to participate in a six-week one hour per-week "group therapy" class. In this class the students would not only learn how they needed to study to be

successful but would also have an opportunity to connect with other students and discuss problems they might encounter. The group therapy title wasn't the actual title of the class but it was lovingly dubbed this after the fact.

In this way this school was being truthful about the difficulties in nursing education while also putting out a hand in love and support. The students responded very positively. Give it a try. I think it might also work for you.



## Some Interesting Facts About Students Today

Have you ever wondered what makes our students today tick? I recently heard

Dr. Joseph Paul speak on this subject. Dr. Paul is considered an expert on post Baby Boomer students. He is the director of Student Affairs at the University of Southern Mississippi and was recently

featured on the Today show. This is how he describes today's student.

They are afraid of getting hurt. Thirty percent worry that they will not be able to afford college. Many come from one-parent homes. Most have experienced divorce. Their relationships are shallow. They may have many friends but they do not share an intimacy with any of them. Bonding is difficult for them. There is a fear that everything is going to fall apart.

Today's students are also more destructive than students of the past. Gambling is up in this age category as well as suicide. Students feel divided and isolated, yet they are more dependent. They do not know how to learn on their own. Concerned parents are coming to talk to instructors about their adult children. These kids are dealing with huge emotional

issues. When asked how they feel, a very common response is that they are just plain tired.

Young men are particularly at risk. They have never been

### Here's a great idea

An instructor from New York State who is using the YASTYT program is having her students keep a Thought Journal as a part of her class. This instructor has found that some students are just too shy to talk about what is going on in their lives and the journal is a wonderful safe place where they can express some of their feelings.

The true test.

The students really like it.

taught how to compete with powerful women and it is beginning to affect them in a few ways. Statistics show that women nationally earn a 2.8 GPA whereas men have a 2.3 GPA. Men are not going to graduate school. Sixty percent of all applications to higher degree institutions are from women. Dr. Paul suggests that if we have a young man in our lives we need to spend quality time with him and help him to find his way in this world.

Dr. Paul also feels that kids today need group therapy. They need a place where they can begin to make bonds and to trust. They need to be helped to be more independent. They need to learn how to think and to become better problem solvers.

The new way we are disseminating the YASTYT program is with small groups of 10 students who meet weekly to

do the Application Journal and talk about what is happening in their lives. This method works because it fills a tremendous need. The meetings help these students to begin to think and learn independently. They are also in a safe place where students can express their concerns and learn that what they are going through is not uncommon.

Schools that have implemented these small-group meetings have found it not only increases the number of students who use the YASTYT program and succeed but also they have found that students are so affected by the group process that they do not want it to end.

If you have questions about these small groups or the Application Journal, please email me. I am happy to share what other schools are doing.

### How To Get Your Faculty To Be More Supportive?

This is what I have learned from researching a number of programs that do have a supportive faculty. First, it all starts from the top down. If your group realizes that you are losing some of your best students and that you want to do something about it, then this is the fertile ground upon which you can build. If your group doesn't get this, you must bring this awareness this awareness to them.

Secondly, it seems that the second-year faculty are the most responsive to helping the first-year students. Newer and younger faculty are usually more responsive than older faculty. Showing the YASTYT video tape helps and cultivating a relationship

with these instructors seems to make a huge difference too.

Attrition rates are incredibly high in most schools. Most instructors feel the pain of this. It is difficult to lose good students. The YASTYT learning system has a proven track record of cutting attrition rates significantly. Remind your staff about why they went into teaching in the first place. Go after their hearts. Everyone wants to feel effective and this is what you are offering them, an opportunity to be effective.

## How To Have More Fun Teaching

If you are talented in Knowing Self and/or Knowing Others according to Howard Gardner's Intelligence Inventory and you are an experiential learner, you can use your natural acting abilities to have more fun in class. This may sound crazy but why not become a character such as a wise funny old lady named Mrs. Goubensloper? Dress her up in something ridiculous and have her visit your class. Let her tell your students not to be afraid of the test. Have her lovingly tell them that they are smart and if they will relax, their smartness will emerge. She can also remind them that who they truly are has nothing to do with how well they do on a test. Mrs. Goubensloper can shower them with love and encouragement and laughter. Just what your students need.

Nursing students are so uptight. You have the power to get them out of their own way and inspire them. Have fun. Use your imagination.

Would you like more hints on how to have more fun teaching using Howard Gardner's learning profile? Then get the person at your school who sets up instructor trainings to give me a call. I have a workshop that lasts one hour. It is wild and fun. It teaches teachers how to rebalance the teaching /learning equation in their classroom. What do I mean by this? I mean that teachers are taking on too much of the responsibility for the learning that is taking place in the classroom. That is why so many of us have resorted to spoonfeeding. Real learning takes place when both teachers and students take equal responsibility for the learning.

Is the teaching/learning balance off in your classroom? Answer yes to any of the following questions and it probably is.

1. Do you feel overwhelmed by your job?
2. At the end of the day do you feel like you have no energy left for anything else?
3. Do you find that some of your students' lights are on but no one is home?
4. Do your students blame you for their poor grades?

My presentation, "How to Have More Fun Teaching" is a great way to end or begin a semester. Here is what people are saying about it.

*"Definitely a good one. Brings back in to focus what the main objective of the teaching/learning process is all about."*

*"This presentation was mind stimulating , energetic and worthwhile. One of the few*

*presentations where my brain was awake with a full stomach"*

*"Enthusiastic! Enlightening."*

*"Interesting and worth a try."*

*"I really enjoyed this presentation!"*

*"It inspired me to be a better teacher."*

*"Great job. Really addressed a universal problem".*

*"Motivating. Inspirational. Awakening of Awareness."*

*"Very informative - information all educators should have. Excellent presentation. Good examples for practical application."*

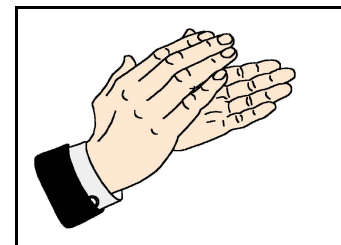
*"It was inspiring - got the juices flowing."*

*"Sounds like an ideas I want to explore. Terrific job."*

## To Be Thankful.

## To Be Appreciative.

What does that mean? For me it means to open my heart to the awareness of how much I have and how blessed I am. All of you are a part of that blessing. Thank you for all that you do. For all that you are.



**Have a wonderful holiday season.**