

You Are Smarter Than You Think! Newsletter

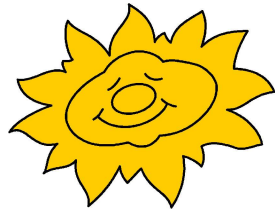
Volume 14

Spring 2002

The "Buy-In" Factor

Is It Spring?

As I look out my window you would never know that Spring is here. snow has been falling for the last three days and the forest looks like a winter wonderland. But as I wait for the wild flowers to grow, I have been working on the growth of my new website, which most of you have obviously discovered by now. Please explore the contents. You may want to use a slide show with your students or some of the Success Stories.



Also scheduled for the near future is a video featuring the resistant student. I think their stories will help motivate some of your students. If you have any success stories you'd like to share, please contact me.

I would also like to have your current e-mail address. I plan to notify you of our Fall newsletter via e-mail.

I am here if you need me. Thanks for all that you do.

Renée Mollan-Masters, M.A.

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For questions, comments, or to be added to the e-mail list, call Renée Mollan-Masters at (541) 482-3506 or e-mail us at yastyt@min.net or visit our website www.youaresmarterthanyouthink.com

✓How do we get our students to believe in the YASTYT system?

Why are some schools more successful than others in using the You Are Smarter Than You Think program? This is the question that I have been pondering for several months and it finally occurred to me that the only difference has to do with the "Buy-In Factor". How fully and completely do instructors and students believe that the YASTYT program will make a difference? In all schools where student use is high and thus results are high, the "buy-in" rate is also high.



Over the last few weeks I have talked to most of the schools that use the YASTYT book. I asked the program directors to tell me specifically what they do to effect "buy-in" by their instructors and

their students. The following is an overview of what was discovered.

Teach the YASTYT program fast and early.

It seems that the faster the students get, understand and use the YASTYT program, the higher the "buy-in" rate. Northwest Mississippi Community College sends out a

letter to incoming nursing students before they enter, detailing the fact that nursing requires a different kind of learning also included are comments from students who have used the YASTYT program successfully.

Mississippi Gulf Community College has found it helpful to have students paper clip the sections of the YASTYT book together that they do not need to read.

Hinds Community College has found that if they start the first day using the new YASTYT techniques, the old habits have less of a chance of taking hold. By the end of the second week, the students have learned the entire YASTYT program.

Kalamazoo Community College has been using the YASTYT program for more than 8 years. They make learning the YASTYT system a pre-requisite to their nursing program. No student gets in without reading the YASTYT book and they are tested on the material the first week.

Golden West College, who has been using the program for over 12 years, presents the book in June to incoming nursing students and makes it the student's responsibility to read and learn the material. Between 60% and 75% of the students use the YASTYT program.

Mississippi Gulf Community College presents the YASTYT program right after the first test so that they have the student's full attention.

Past students share their success.

Using former students to help sell the YASTYT program works too. Sometimes these former students were used when the program was initially introduced and sometimes they were brought in later. Without exception schools that used successful students to tell their stories found a larger percentage of new students using the YASTYT program. In addition while the new students were learning the system, those who had initial success were used to teach and encourage the others. Kalamazoo Community College placed students initially in like-attribute groups. All the Linguistic students were together and all the Spatial students were together and they helped one another come up with strategies that produced success.

Presenting the YASTYT program in a caring and supportive manner is huge.

Being truthful with the students about how difficult things will be in nursing school or college is important but equally important is letting them know that the instructors are on their side and want them to succeed.

Itawamba Community College brings in the school's Vice President and Deans to talk to the students and encourage their success.



This is The Way

Mississippi Women's College, California State University Sacramento, and Hinds Community College, and all spend time building supportive environments that help the students believe that their best interest is at heart. In addition

the faculty at Mississippi Women's College often listens to student concerns and frequently has made changes based on students suggestions. One student that dropped out of Itawamba Community College's nursing program

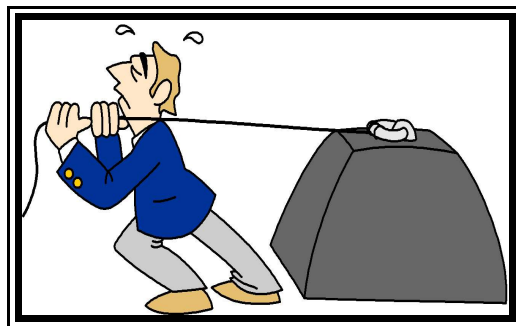
a few years earlier re-enrolled this year. Mid-semester she remarked about how different things were. She now felt the instructors were partners in success rather than her adversaries.

Re-enforcing the use of the YASTYT program is important.

Many schools give copies of the YASTYT Learning Profile to the student's advisor, so that when a student comes in after doing poorly on a test they can very specifically counsel them on where they went wrong. Brandywine Community College created a diagnostic guide that lets students see very specifically what kinds of errors they are making when taking a test. This Diagnostic Grid is further explained in this newsletter.

Demonstrating the techniques in class helps lower the resistance to trying the techniques.

Sometimes further steps need to be taken to get students over one hill that will let them try a new technique. Some schools take time to demonstrate different techniques and have the students try them in class. At the University of Hawaii the students make an agreement with their instructor to try a technique one week and then the next class period they report on what occurred. Some schools actually demonstrate the techniques in class. This allows students the opportunity to try something new in a safe environment, which increases their chance of using the technique at home when they study.



Don't Do It All Alone

Make the Application Journal a requirement.

The passive-resistant student is a fact of life these days. How do we cope? I am not totally sure. Here are some ideas. First require the Application Journal. Only give credit when these weekly assignments have been done and turned in. Have everyone speak in each class each week, talking about what they had used. Finally give full credit only if the students pass their next test to prove that they are using the techniques.

The Mentor

At Golden West College fourth semester students are given the opportunity to become mentors to first semester students. They receive ten points on their final grade for doing this. Most of these students are using the YASTYT program and they greatly assist the first semester student in believing in the program.

How about instructor "buy-in"?

An additional part of the "buy-in" factor is that the instructors need to "buy-in" too. It isn't necessary for all of them to believe but you need enough of them so that the students are being re-enforced in class to use their correct learning style. Old study habits die hard.

So how have other programs increased professor "buy-in"? Southwest Mississippi Community College assigned each first semester instructor the responsibility of teaching one week of the YASTYT class. As a result

Dr. Nancy Mott of Villanova University believes that learning the YASTYT system takes care of the need to teach note-taking and time management skills.

the instructors had to read the YASTYT book and prepare for the class. The instructors usually got hooked during this preparation and teaching experience.

At Northwest Mississippi College the non-receptive instructors were not asked to participate. They were taken completely out of the loop. Kellogg Community College bought a book for every instructor and the instructors went through the book together. They really liked learning about themselves and consequently began to believe in the system.

Villanova University gave a workshop for the instructors detailing specifically why the YASTYT system works. Nothing was left for them to figure out and when the workshop was over, the instructors saw the sense of the program and were fully supportive.

High attrition rates and feeling badly about them motivates some instructors to fully embrace the YASTYT program just so their students can be successful.

Talking to all these schools made it clear to me that instructors will not learn the YASTYT program on their own. Some formal or informal presentation helps tremendously.

A couple of schools brought in students that had been successful to talk to the faculty about their experiences with the YASTYT system. Hinds Community College has regular faculty meetings to discuss what is working and what is not working with the YASTYT program. This keeps YASTYT continually in the instructors' awareness.

Itawamba Community College has taken the

YASTYT program to heart. The instructors go out of their way to support the students using the program in their class. In the

Fall, I will bring the full story of one instructor who, on test day, completely redoes his room with signs that say, "I Love Taking Tests", "You are Smarter Than You Think" and on and on. One of his classes turned the tables on him. The students decorated his room for him before one test and had "T" shirts made for everyone that said, "I Love Taking Tests."

I am convinced that instructors will get behind this program when they hear from students. Mississippi Gulf Community College made a slide show of the students' success and presented it to the faculty. On the YASTYT

web site go to the slide show section and you will find a slide show entitled, "Fourteen Things You Should Know About the YASTYT Book." There are statistical slides that you can use with both your instructors and your students to help them believe in the system.



If all goes well this Fall I will have a new video prepared that should help you with both your resistant instructors and r students.

✓ A Resistance Reducer

Janet Curley from the University of Hawaii has a technique that helps students push through that uncomfortable feeling we all get when we do things differently. Janet has the students clasp their hands together, interlocking their fingers. (Try doing this yourself. It will have more meaning.) Then she tells the students to change their thumb position. If the right thumb is on top, she asks them to put it on the bottom and if the left is on top to put it on the bottom. Next she asks the students to shift the fingers - one finger over so

that each finger is in a different position. Then she asks the students to feel how that feels. She tells them this is just how we feel when we try something new. It's uncomfortable at first but after a while it feels less uncomfortable. She then compares this to how they will feel when they first begin

using the YASTYT techniques.

I have been playing with this technique for a week or so and it is amazing how quickly the uncomfortable feelings lessen. Try this, it is very experiential and it may just reach some of your students.

NOTE: Auditory and Combination Learners who read aloud during tests can do so without making a sound. They can hear the words in their head. This works just as well as hearing it out loud.

✓ Brandywine School of Nursing Diagnostic Grid

Below you will find a grid that will help your students pinpoint errors that they are making when taking a test. The following are my thoughts on what might be going wrong in terms of the student's use or non-use of the YASTYT program.

1. *Did not recognize the material.*

It is possible that the students learned the wrong material. If so, have them start using their Reorganization Skill.

“But I knew the answer, I just misread the question,” said the frustrated student.

2. *Did not understand the subject matter.*

Two things could be happening here. They could not be learning the material in long-term memory or they could not be using their correct Reception Skill when reading the test questions.

3-6 *All of these have this issue.*

They may not be using their Reception Skill when reading the test question.

7. *Did not understand the question.*

The Reception Skill may be a problem as well as their reading level. You may want to make sure they are comprehending language at a high enough level to deal with your course.

8. *Read into the question.*

Again the students may not be using their Reception Skill while taking the test.

9. *Used incorrect rationale for selecting answer.*

This is a test skill.

10. *Changed the answer.*

The student probably is not completely sure of the answer. They likely do not have the material learned in long-term memory.

The Grid



Brandywine School of Nursing Diagnostic Grid for Recording Test-Taking Errors

The purpose of this grid is to display your errors in test-taking. When you review a test, place a mark for each missed item in the square that you think best describes your error in thinking. Make sure you place the mark in the appropriate test column. Once you have listed all your errors, total your errors and look for patterns in your thinking or actions.

COURSE _____	Exam Date	Exam Date	Exam Date	Exam Date	Exam Date	Exam Date	ITEMS WRONG PER CATEGORY
ERROR CATEGORIES							
1. Did not remember the subject matter							
2. Did not understand subject matter							
3. Did not recognize main idea.							
4. Did not recognize principle or rationale for correct answer							
5. Missed key word. (Could not define key word in question.)							
6. Did not read all distractors carefully.							
7. Did not understand question.							
8. Read into the question.							
9. Used incorrect rationale for selecting answer.							
10. Changed the answer							
11. Other reason _____							
TOTAL ITEMS WRONG PER TEST							

Category of Greatest Number of Errors

Strategies to Decrease Errors