



NISOD INNOVATION
ABSTRACTS

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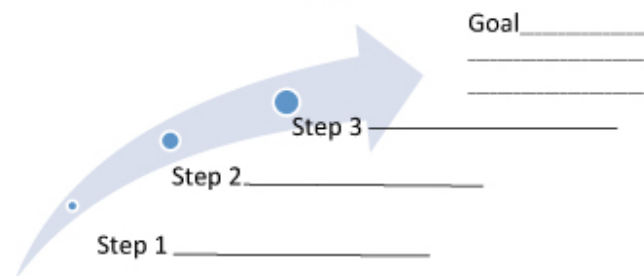
Thought for the Week Wednesdays: Making Connections in Minutes

Can five minutes of classroom time once a week really make a difference? I set out to answer this question as I sought to improve retention and student success in my pre-curriculum reading classes. I created what I call my “Thought for the Week Wednesdays” as an attempt to bring some of the techniques and skills I taught in my study skills classes to my reading students. These five-minute, “ticket-out-the-door” activities ask students to respond to a question that requires personal reflection. At the bottom of each half-sheet of paper, I share my own reflection on some aspect of student success.

Sample Thought for the Week Wednesday:

Thought for the Week Wednesdays Week Thirteen

E. Moore



Thought for the Week: The path to every goal is a series of small steps. What small steps can you take today to get to your next goal?

My original intent was to prompt my students to reflect and practice self-assessment skills. I think that my “Thought for the Week Wednesdays” accomplished this goal; but it had an unintended side effect that in the end proved to be the most valuable. These weekly response activities gave my students a time and place to share personal thoughts, ideas, goals, dreams, and feelings that they would not have shared with me otherwise. They gave me a venue to write an encouraging note, pen a few words of affirmation, or give positive reinforcement to a struggling student. They allowed us to make a connection.

I have read that students who feel that their instructors care about them are more successful. And what I found was that my retention rate increased appreciably from the previous semester when I implemented this simple technique. A less tangible but no less valuable benefit was an improvement in student attitudes and the academic environment of the classroom. These weekly reminders of the bigger picture served to help my students maintain or reset focus.

At the end of the semester, I have a Thought for the Week that asks my students to tell me what they liked least about the course and what they liked best about the course. Quite a few students noted the Thought for the Week as one of their favorite items. I have to agree with them. For such a small investment of time, this technique has produced big results.

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