Thought for the Day –
Master Lesson

**Thought for the Day**
“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
—William Butler Yeats

**Overview:** The “Thought for the Day” should motivate learners to examine their commitment to improving themselves through the lifelong journey of education. They will also learn that the journey to their goals is a step-by-step process.

**Educational Goal:** The objective of this lesson is for all learners to (1) comprehend the “Thought for the Day” and (2) value the “Thought for the Day” as it could apply to their lives and goals.

**Objectives:** Learners will be able to:

*Cognitive:*
— Explain what the author’s quote is saying.
— Explain what the quote means to the learner.
— Predict how learners can apply the quote and their interpretation to their lives.

*Affective:*
— Describes why the quote is important.

**Skill Standard Connections:** This lesson has connections with the Tennessee KSAs – *Talk With Respect, Listen for Understanding, and Get Along With Others*; and with EFF Standards — *Listen Actively, Observe Critically, Reflect and Evaluate, Read With Understanding, and Convey Ideas in Writing.* (Appendix II.)

**Teaching Strategy:** “Thought for the Day” is a good way to start the day’s activities and focus the learners’ attention, thinking, and motivation towards specific topics and goals. “Thoughts for the Day” are also a great way to connect EFF Framework concepts to learners’ insights and reflections. There are no wrong answers because learners add their meaning and interpretation to the thoughts. The teacher can lead the learners toward the direction of what the author intended as well as toward the direction of course and lesson goals.
Write the thought on the classroom board before the class starts along with the page number in the Learner’s Handbook. Introduce the thoughts by having learners read them out loud. The process for the “Thought for the Day” is always the same, but the teacher may have to assist the process when learners have difficulty. Initially working by themselves, learners will read (Read With Understanding) the thoughts to themselves. The learner will then use the four key questions to reflect and evaluate on the meaning, importance, and use of the thoughts. The learner will write (Convey Ideas in Writing) responses to the questions. Allow approximately 15 minutes for writing. Learners will discuss (Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively, and Observe Critically) their learning insights with each other (Cooperate With Others). Allow approximately 20 minutes for discussion. Use the final 10 minutes to summarize the discussion and make important connections to goals, the EFF Framework (other appropriate standards), and the world we live in. The thoughts have been selected to bring out the learners’ thoughts and feelings about various topics such as education, goals, success, determination, etc. The teacher will help learners understand their insights, feelings, and commitments in relation to future learning, course objectives, and their lives.

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” This quote by William Butler Yeats is telling us that the pursuit of education is a high-energy, inspiring journey. We know that journey is a step-by-step learning process that takes time. When we were young we saw education with limits (filling the pail) and not as an exciting lifelong journey. This quote speaks to a passion for learning and the fun of learning. Each teacher should develop individual insights to the quotes and personal examples to use to help the learners.

Lesson Plan

Introduction

Attention: We’re going to start by using our thinking skills along with reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to analyze a “Thought for the Day.” This is a great way to get our minds going, sort through some very important feelings, and build some very important ideas and beliefs that will last you throughout your lifelong learning journey.

Question: Why have you returned to school?
Question: What would you like to achieve while here?
Motivation: The “Thought for the Day” is a great way to get your mind going, sort through some very important feelings, and build some very important ideas, skills, and beliefs that will last you throughout your lifelong learning journey. It will help with those reasons concerning why you are here and what you want to achieve. “Thoughts for the Day” are like a math problem: the first thought could be a 2, the second thought could be a 3, and by adding them together you get 5. It is the same way with your thoughts and feelings. They add up to form a strong foundation for your growth. So let’s work through the process, and we will see how it will help us put our goals and direction into clearer terms and actions.

Overview: You have made the decision to return to school to improve your education and achieve certain goals. This lesson helps to put into words the feelings and thoughts you’re starting with. This lesson also lays the foundation for future lessons and “Thoughts for the Day.” We will use a “read, write, and discuss” process using four key questions to help us develop new understandings to put into action. We will learn from one another and, over time, watch each other’s growth.

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1. Read the “Thought for the Day”
Read the quotes and begin to think about the meaning of the quote. Think about how to use the four questions to help focus their thinking.

1. What is the author trying to say?
First, put yourself in the author’s shoes to try to understand what he or she was saying. Why did the author use certain words to paint a certain picture? Help learners believe in their abilities to think clearly and answer the questions. There are no correct answers. They are the learners’ opinions, and their opinions and voices count.

2. What does it mean to you?
Once you understand what the author was trying to say, then ask yourself, “What does it mean to me?” Think about yourself, your goals, family, and community.

Teaching Tip
Understand the learners’ responses in order to relate them to their insights and feelings about the quotes later in the lesson.

Teaching Tip
This may initially take 15 minutes the first day. Once learners become more comfortable with the process, they automatically begin their work without much assistance. This may be new to them, but relate this process to taking the essay part of the GED.
3. Why is it important?
Now, place your own personal meaning to the quote and think about the importance of what it means to you. This is adding value to what you feel strongly about, which is a key step. If you feel something is important and place a value on it, you are more likely to use it in your lives.

4. How can you use it?
Think about how you can apply the concept to your lives. This is a critical step along with attaching a personal value to the quote. Start to identify specific areas in your lives where you can take action and improve.

Main Point 2. Write – Learners Write Their Responses to the Four Questions
(Allow approximately 15 minutes for the learners to write their responses. Their responses may range from a few sentences to a substantial paragraph depending upon their thinking and writing abilities. Take whatever you get, and each day encourage the learners to write a little more. In time they will increase their thinking and writing abilities substantially. The teacher should circulate among the learners, answering individual questions and offering encouragement.)

Main Point 3. Discuss – Learners Share Their Responses and Discuss Their Insights
(There are two ways to conduct this part. (1) Taking the first question, ask learners to share their responses. Continue question by question. (2) You can have each learner share all four of his or her responses at once. There are pros and cons to each approach. It depends on what is most comfortable for your class. Initially, the first process has worked best because the learners work through each question at the same pace. After a reasonable amount of time, ask for individual volunteers to share what they have written. Provide positive feedback and help relate the learners’ responses to the quote. Encourage crosstalk and feedback among the learners. A technique that works is to highlight the various choices of words to describe the quote. The teacher should write key words on the board as a visual reminder of learners’ ideas and for the final summary of the work. The teacher should work with the learners’ thoughts and insights.)

Teaching Tip
Initially some learners may be reluctant, embarrassed, or unsure of their abilities to do this work. The key is to get them to try thinking about the quote as it would make sense in their own life experiences. Another strategy is to translate the quote into their words. Because of the learners’ adult experiences, goals, and desires for themselves and their loved ones, they have the capacity to be successful at this and improve with practice. Use the Read With Understanding standard to assist the learner systematically through this step.
Conclusion

Re-Motivation: Education is so important for each of us and the people we care about that we all must develop an excitement and a passion for it. It can make such a difference in our lives that we cannot take it for granted nor avoid it as we might have done when we were younger. There is always something new to learn around us everyday. And we can help others develop that same excitement about education and learning.

Close: Education is really a lifelong journey that never ends. Lao Tsu, a Chinese philosopher and contemporary of Confucius said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.” You have taken your first step today. Light the fire! Feel the passion! And don’t stop!

Teaching Tips

If learners have difficulty with this step, the key is to get them to write down what they are thinking. Use the Convey Ideas in Writing Standard to assist learners systematically through the process.

Use the Speak So Others Can Understand, Actively Listening, and Observe Critically Standards to assist the learners through the process.

Teaching Tip

Summary: Have learners summarize what they have learned by this process. The teacher should highlight that the learners have also demonstrated the Standard of Cooperate With Others. Teacher should work with the responses and link them to the quote, the lesson objective, and the broader goals that were initially shared by learners in the attention step. Learners should connect insights to previous learning, future lessons, and the course goals.