Reflection

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Throughout the duration of this course covering learning theories, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on my teaching practices. I do know that I fall short in some areas, but I now have methods to help me improve; I also know that I am doing okay in other areas, and the information in the course strengthened my confidence. As for the lesson I had to teach using the checklist implemented in *The 12 Touchstones of Good Teaching*, I like the outcome of the lesson, but I would change a few things.

All of the touchstones benefitted my students and I as we worked our way through the lesson. Touchstones 2 and 3 are areas where I frequently fall short in everyday teaching. I liked the focus both of these touchstones gave my students. The pre-assessment let me know where I needed to focus the bulk of my attention in the upcoming lesson, and it was vastly different from where I anticipated and originally had planned to spend the majority of my instructional time. The pre-assessment let me know that my students needed more work with terminology than with applying the skill of proving from where their ideas came. The following graphs show the difference in the two areas.

These two graphs show that students were less comfortable with the terminology surrounding characterization, a skill I thought they already had, than they were with citing evidence from text to prove a character trait. I let the information from these graphs drive my instruction so that I added a component into the lesson plan that required students to acquire the concepts surrounding the terminology.

One thing I would do differently would be not allow so much time between the pre-assessment and the actual teaching of the lesson. My students and I felt disconnected when we came back to the lesson a full three weeks after the pre-assessment. I feel like I would be more comfortable allowing no more than a week between the pre-assessment and the teaching of the lesson.

As I am not a super nurturing person, the middle section of the touchstones which include being supportive were the hardest for me to follow, especially Items 6 and 8. I had to alter more things in my lesson plans here than anywhere else. I do like the changes I made to my rules as they are less controlling and more student friendly. I also think my students will respond in a more positive way to the new rules.

Including all of the touchstones, however, made this lesson a much more effective lesson than it would have been without them. I plan to work over the summer to add areas from the checklist to many of my current unit plans.