Reflecting on your Teaching

1. Choose one of the following metaphors to characterize your relationship to your students, and the place of your course in the larger curriculum or in the intellectual and moral lives of your students.

   A. A trip to the zoo       K. A romance (or a long marriage)
   B. A safari              L. An obstacle course
   C. A symphony            M. A five-course French meal
   D. A cruise to the Mediterranean N. An abstract expressionist painting
   E. An Aristotelian tragedy O. A hippie gathering
   F. The game of Risk       P. Building a dream house
   G. A map of Saturn’s moon, Titan Q. A masquerade ball
   H. Playing Texas Hold-Um R. A trip to the grocery store
   I. Ice Fishing           S. A subway trip in New York City
   J. Adventures of Sponge-Bob Square Pants T. A chess games

2. Develop the metaphor into three parts with your group (with a beginning, middle and end), focusing on the kind of dynamic you cultivate with your students and the way they, in turn, relate to you. (5 minutes)

   Example: Teaching my class is like coaching a soccer team. After explaining the basic rules, and providing instructions on how to kick and trap, I let them pass the ball to other students (teammates), who I hope will then pass it on to even more students. Eventually, they learn to work together to score a goal.

3. Write down two aspects of your teaching that are important to you based on this metaphor. (5 minutes)

   Example: I realize that student interaction and creating a student-centered environment is important. I keep lecture time to a minimum, and try to get students to learn on their own. Once they can “dribble and pass” by themselves, I can intervene to correct or modify a particular behavior as needed. I believe in teaching within a context in which the student can understand the value of the thing being taught.

4. Write down a specific classroom experience that illustrates the principles discussed in #3. (7 minutes)

   Example: I assign one-page papers based on a specific reading and ask students to read and respond to each others’ work. This jump starts the discussion and gets students to learn and grow from each other as much as they do from me. It also gets them to write down their thoughts on a topic toward a larger research paper (the “goal”).