



I completed the final exam Sunday morning for my TESA certificate that adds an extra element to my S.C. Dept. of Education certifications. TESA makes it so that now, the classes I teach will have what are called OMS codes (Offender Management System), allowing courses to be put into the SCDC database, giving students actual credit for the work they've done. All thanks to this Teaching Effective Skills for Classroom Achievement, TESA, "training" putting the prison system's stamp of approval on the curricula, class setting, and any TESA certified instructor.

Since I was already trained as a teacher (and have been for many years), the experience, and previous training by the Palmetto Unified School District, PUSD, gave me an edge over others in the TESA training course. There was nothing in the TESA curricula that I wasn't already knowledgeable of; in fact, I now realize how thorough PUSD's training really was. The TESA curricula was a kind of summing up of what it takes to teach. It's still a full two-semester's worth of material that we had to cram into just ten weeks (originally supposed to be only eight weeks, but it was prolonged due to the holidays, and unpreparedness of the TESA instructor(s)).

I received 434 points of an available 450, giving me a **96.4** percent!!! Not bad for someone that didn't really try. :) Like I said, the material was not new to me. So, why did I do it? For my students. While there was nothing for me to learn myself, TESA was a needed achievement for me to have for the sake of my students, "the purpose of teaching is to ensure that those taught acquire a prescribed body of knowledge and set of values. Both knowledge and values are taken to reflect a society's selection of what it most wants to transmit to its future citizens and requires its future workforce to be able to do." (--Peter Newsam, education theorist, *Teaching and Learning*)

SCDC prisons finally claim to be entering the age of modern rehabilitation, with the acknowledgment that about 95 percent of prisoners like myself will be free one day, and should be prepared for the free world with the knowledge society "requires its future workforce to be able to do." I take pleasure in being one of the teachers they have relied on first, to help implement this forward step in education.