

Happy New Year!

Last year's data research conducted on October 27, 2016 indicated that 45% of Americans made New Year's Resolutions with the top resolution *"self-improvement or education related resolutions."* 39 percent of people in their twenties achieved their resolutions; 14 percent of people over 50 achieved their resolutions. Interesting how that works!

As I plan and practice what I preach, I aim to be an "outlier" and increase the percent of those who achieve their resolutions!

This year, I made a deliberate and intentional resolution... admit my mistakes and problem-solve around them so that I can learn a multitude of ways to approach a situation and then add those learnings to my repertoire of support for future use.

This may be easier said than done...

How many of us try to teach others that learning from a mistake is a life lesson and that life lesson will help us make better decisions? If we claim that we learn from our mistakes, why are we always so afraid to admit them?

When instructional coaches establish relationships with their teaching colleagues, they must remember to remain impartial without being detached and objective without being aloof. They must balance their passion of helping teachers understand what changes in instructional practice are needed with just the right kind of questioning techniques to encourage deeper thinking. Sometimes, those questions create angst and anxiety; sometimes the deeper thinking causes doubt and uncertainty. And sometimes, what emerges from these conversations is the recognition that a mistake was made and a quiet disruption to the status quo follows.

So, what is it about recognizing our mistakes that makes us feel like we are not in control of a

situation? For one thing, we try very hard NOT to make mistakes; that is, we try to be prepared so that others do not see our flaws and we do not fail. We know that we are not perfect but we want others to think we are. We don't want anyone to judge us on our mistakes but rather on our successes. It is a fear of being judged – the idea that people will think less of us if we make a mistake. But that's not how learning occurs. We do not learn from what we do right; if we are already doing "it" right (whatever the "it" is), then what are we learning?

We learn when we reflect *"in, on, and about"* our actions to determine if our goals were achieved. If not, we need to take a step back, revisit our goals with a new eye, and make adjustments where needed. We need to admit that we may have made a mistake in planning or delivering our instructional practice. There may be a disparity or disconnect in what we thought would happen and what actually happened.

In the PIIC world of instructional coaching, teachers have the opportunity to meet and discuss professional practice with their coaches before implementation. They engage in ongoing planning conversations (B), valuable classroom visitations (D), and non-judgmental debriefing sessions (A) where feedback is specific, timely, and descriptive with the goal of helping to transform practice. Coaches and teachers engage in conversations that expose and share mistakes in a liberating and supportive environment. These conversations are meant to promote shared learning and successful teaching experiences along with the powerful lessons about what could or should have been done differently. That's where the learning takes shape.

As George Bernard Shaw said, *"Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time."* As coaches work with their teaching colleagues, remember that we all learn from our mistakes and that our most valued teachable moments come when we least expect them. Honor mistakes made and rather than dwell on how they occurred, move forward and collectively problem-solve to resolve the issue and ensure that learning takes place and successful implementation follows.