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***“Sometimes, you have to look back in order to understand the things that lie ahead.”
-Yvonne Woon***

There is always a sense accomplishment at the end of any journey. From building a birdhouse, going grocery shopping, to achieving a doctorate, what journeys give us is a beginning and an end. But is there ever really an end? How often do we complete one journey, expecting an ending, but finding our way to yet another new and related experience? A journey's ending is not only a completion of one experience, but also a connection to another. In our work as coaches and mentors, we reflect on our journeys both in a data and vision based perspective.

Reflection on our coaching work often falls into two categories: data-based reflection and vision-based reflection. Our data provides us with empirical evidence. It tells us how many meetings were held, numbers of teachers coached, the academic achievements of students. These are the numbers that make up our work. We also reflect on how we “ended up” with our work's vision compared to what we had originally projected. Did we create the ‘community’ we had hoped for? Has our work influenced teacher practice in the classroom? Have our relationships grown stronger through our shared work? However, the true value of reflection is when we combine both data and vision.

In reflecting on both data and vision, we are able to see our challenges as “new learnings” and our successes as “positive pathways.” We use our reflections to gain wisdom. We then use this wisdom to plan and forge ahead towards the next year. Action planning based on what was successful and what was learned supports us in creating more targeted and focused work with both coaches and schools.

Reflection also helps with the management of our time and available resources. Looking back at the previous journey, we see what we were able to achieve. Reflection gives us better guidance about the potential time frame and resources available for our new work. Setting targets for focused work on the BDA cycle, facilitation of professional development, planning and scheduling collaborative conversations are all examples of what we may want to do or modify based on our reflection.

Upon reflection, many of us discover that the greatest resource available to us is each other. Through collaboration and partnering, we as coaches, administrators and mentors, can achieve more than we could on our own. It is this shared experience of our work that sets a path towards the essential mission of PIIC: to support instructional coaching which helps teachers

strengthen instructional practice, increase student engagement, and improve student learning.

As we take a look back and plan for tomorrow, reflection needs to support our planned actions so that they may best strengthen instructional practice and improve student learning.

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