

By [IU PIIC Mentors Teri Everett and Donette Porter](#)

Reflection IS a Gift. As we roll through December and into January, we naturally start to reflect on the year that has passed and set resolutions for the New Year. Taking time from our hectic schedules and lives to allow for self-reflection is a gift we can give ourselves this time of year. John Dewey said, "We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience." As mentors and coaches, one of our roles is to support teachers and administrators in reflective practices.

One way to incorporate reflection and/or support others is to simply ask, What, So What, and Now What. When we truly understand the situation and the underlying issues, it allows for action to take place. Since the learning is not in the action but in the mediation of it, these questions requires that deep kind of understanding. Providing others and ourselves the opportunity and time to contemplate our practice is a priceless gift not only to ourselves and others but also to the students.

Another way reflection can take place is in the form of one-on-one coaching. The BDA cycle of coaching lends the format for this reflection. Reflection comes into planning what is needed and what was delivered. By having a non-evaluative discussion, the mentor or coach can provide the mind space for the other to see the reflection of the lesson.

A third reflective technique is to set goals and to journal the progress of accomplishing these goals. There is no better gift than encouragement, recognition, and success, and journal writing will do that for the writer. Goal setting with journal evidence can be private or public depending on the individual. Either way, journals will document the reflection and will add the personal voice.

You can see the many reasons why reflection is a method to subscribe for personal and professional development and improvement. Since the year is coming to an end and 2017 is quickly approaching, the perfect gift for yourself and for others is the opportunity to stop, breathe, and reflect. Allow that mirror image to refine the other gifts you have to give. And, may this New Year be a true Reflection of the possibilities for you and yours.