

Reflection on the Pandemic
6/20/20

Just checking in again, now that we're reaching the end of the school year, a year like no other. Who knows what the fall will bring. Hopefully it will be safe to have students in school buildings again, but it's a little disconcerting that the conclusions about student and staff safety are without good data on children and covid-19. Very few children are tested, which leads to misleading data that suggests that children do not get or spread the virus, but when schools reopened in Israel, where the virus had been eradicated, they found the opposite, which led to a resurgence, and they had to close schools within two weeks of reopening.

As difficult as it is to put worries about the future aside, it's important to do that now—at least for a moment—so you can organize the experience you've already had before it becomes overwritten by the experiences you have next. This is a good time to reflect, right now, after three months of trying to work as a distance team, three months trying to educate students from a distance during the pandemic crisis.

Sometimes we spend so much energy doing what is difficult, coping with adversity, that we don't always give ourselves a chance to reflect. We can lose so much of the experience that way, lose valuable insights and affirming memories. This is a chance to construct the narrative you want about this unique part of your career, rather than letting the brain's negative default setting dominate the narrative that accompanies you into the next stage of your journey. Here are ten questions I'm using for my own reflection (there is no particular order or priority or even a need to use all 10). Maybe you focus on one question a day (many times throughout the day) for 10 days. Make a space in your brain for each aspect of the experience.

- 1) What did you do well? What did you discover about your skills, your strengths, and your resilience?
- 2) What did you overcome and what impressed you about what you were able to learn and accomplish?
- 3) In what ways did you become stronger or more capable from this experience?
- 4) What were some proud moments and/or heartwarming moments?
- 5) How would you rate your staff's effectiveness as a team? In what impressive ways did people pull together? Think about the difference it made when you reached out to colleague.
- 6) Where do we need to improve?
- 7) Who or what do you appreciate from this experience?
- 8) What did we learn and what new abilities did we acquire that will help us going forward, regardless of where students are educated?
- 9) What has this crisis done to us, taken from us, and how do you plan to restore?
- 10) How would you rate your level of self-care; the recognition of your self-care needs and your ability to implement self-care strategies? Did you get better at this over the past three months?