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Subject: Welcome Back & Happy New Year
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Dear Colleague:

Welcome back, and Happy New Year to you!

Each new year generates words of wisdom about the passage of time, the significance of endings and beginnings, and how things change – or stay the same. It used to be that I enjoyed reading in newspapers and magazines what others have mulled over and written about this threshold from one year into another. Today, these pieces of wisdom are totally inescapable on social media, especially Facebook.

This year my favorite bit of advice comes from British author Neil Gaiman. You may know him for his comic books, children's books, downright bizarre, and sometimes hilarious writings. His works showcase an amazing depth and breadth of talents – and very likely, not everyone, including me, enjoy all of his works. However, reading this advice for the new year reminded me of our emphasis on teaching creativity within our 21st century skills focus, and it's pretty clear that this fellow "walks the talk" as Mr. Gaiman values what is gained by taking risks and making mistakes. Here's what he has to say:

I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world.

You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something.

So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life.

Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it. Make your mistakes, next year and forever.

Who knows what we and our students can become, discover, learn or accomplish if we are willing to try what we've not done before, accept mistakes and learn from them.

Here's to a another great year of striving, reaching, learning and making the world a little bit better from each mistake and the improvements resulting from them. Here's to a great 2016!

Warm wishes for the New Year, to you and your loved ones,

Gary



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