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I'm almost ashamed to say it, but I'm prone to mistakes. We've all been there. You're going over your notes for class, once, twice, perhaps even three times, trying to avoid any chance of making a blunder in class. Despite your best efforts, it still happens. Maybe it was just a misspoken word, perhaps it was a flawed instruction, but we've all committed missteps in the classroom. Some gaffes are embarrassing. I've had clothing mishaps before, such as misbuttoning my shirt for example. Some flubs can be technical, like not having saved the PowerPoint slides you were working on. I've even gone as far as giving the wrong exam to a large class, or not making enough copies of an exam on numerous occasions.

For those of us that consider ourselves experienced in the classroom we've learned that it isn't so much about not making mistakes, but instead it's how you handle them. As instructors, we can quickly put ourselves in a very uncomfortable position. I watched a segment of the show *Adam Ruins Everything* and learned that when someone points out an error, your fight or flight instinct kicks in. As crazy as it sounds, this is often true. As instructors, we need to be able to control the instinct to fight back when a student calls out an error we've made. So, take a breath before responding.

Instead of focusing on avoiding in-class bumbles, I've discovered the pedagogical power of embracing my mistakes. I teach classes that have a lot of math and example problems, and this can lead to many different types of simple errors. I make it a habit of inserting mistakes on purpose during class as I work through examples. I'll forget a sign on a value or to square a value, for example. When I wittingly introduce errors, I hope that someone in the class spots the mistake and speaks up. My goal is for the students to learn from the error and then avoid it when they do the problem on their own.

The encouragement of in-class responses and discussion are significant benefits to this approach. I make sure to pause after I intentionally inserting an error within a problem. In some cases, I ask the class if everything looks correct. Also, by making mistakes, students see you're human and become more willing to ask more questions.

Another benefit of the approach is this: When I do make a genuine mistake, I can turn it into a learning point. If I, as the expert, am capable of error on a particular problem, students will probably stumble as well. But, of course, I then remind the class that my mistake was intentional--as are all such errors.

So, don't be afraid to use the mistakes you make in class to your advantage. Students will learn from your witting and unwitting errors, as well as from their own.