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EMBRACING THE FAIL

FIRST ATTEMPTS IN LEARNING IN MUSIC ENSEMBLES



A Music Experience

歌詞

さくら さくら さくら 野山も里も 見わたすかぎり かつみか雲か 朝日におう
 さくら さくら 花ざかり

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♩=60ぐらい
 平調子(一は五と同音に調弦する)

いずれの糸も親指で弾く。

Japanese Koto Music



ツ 四 = do

テ 五 = mi

リ 六 = fa

ツ 七 = la

ハ 八 = ti

チ 九 ま = do

○ = sustain

歌詞

さくら さくら さくら 野山も里も 見わたすかぎり 朝日におう
 さくら さくら 花ざかり

| | | | | | | | |
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♩=60ぐらい
 平調子(一は五と同音に調弦する)

平調子(一は五と同音に調弦する)

♩=60ぐらい

いづれの糸も親指で弾く。

WHAT REACTIONS DO YOU HAVE TO THIS EXPERIENCE?

EMOTIONAL

FRUSTRATION

ANGER

DISAPPOINTMENT

SOCIAL

EMBARRASSMENT

WITHDRAWAL

MOCKERY

MUSICAL

LACK OF SKILLS

MISSING CONCEPTS

UNFAMILILAR

TECHNIQUES

“I have not failed. I just found 10,000 ways that won't work”

FAILURE

outside of
education



FAILURE
outside of
education



Elon Musk 
@elonmusk

Next rocket landing on drone ship in 2 to 3 weeks w way more hydraulic fluid. At least it shd explode for a diff reason.

RETWEETS 4,485 LIKES 5,826

7:07 AM - 16 Jan 2015

432 4.5K 5.8K

Follow



Elon Musk 
@elonmusk

Replying to @SpaceX

Fuel header tank pressure was low during landing burn, causing touchdown velocity to be high & RUD, but we got all the data we needed! Congrats SpaceX team hell yeah!!

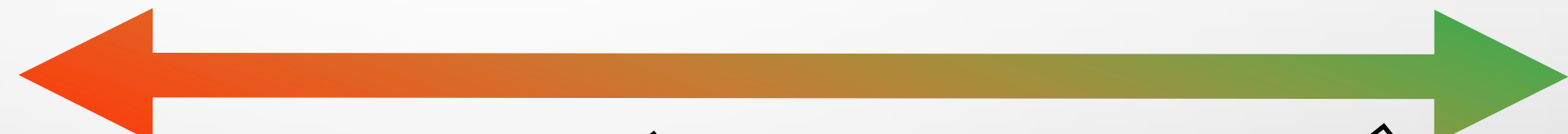
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FAILURE

outside of
education

BLAMEWORTHY

Praiseworthy



Deviance

Inattention

Lack of ability

Process inadequacy

Task challenge

Process complexity

Uncertainty

Hypothesis testing

Exploratory testing

TWO TYPES OF FAILURE

CONSTRUCTIVE



DESTRUCTIVE



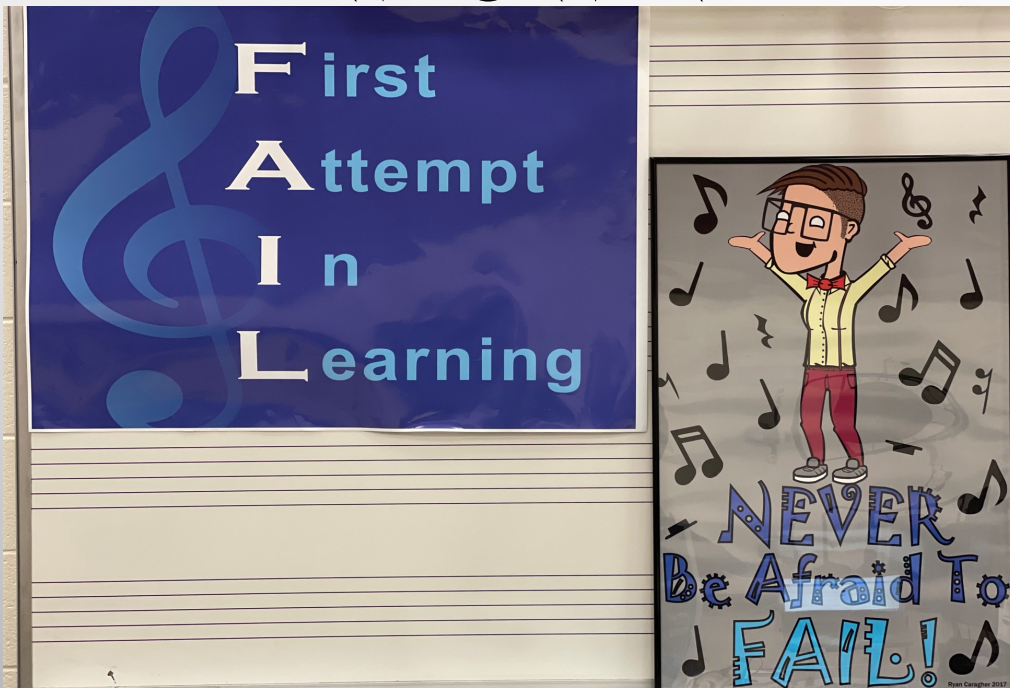
STEP 1

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE
ENVIRONMENT

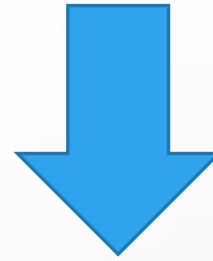


STEP 1

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE
ENVIRONMENT



MAKE FAILURE VISIBLE



NORMALIZE FAILURE

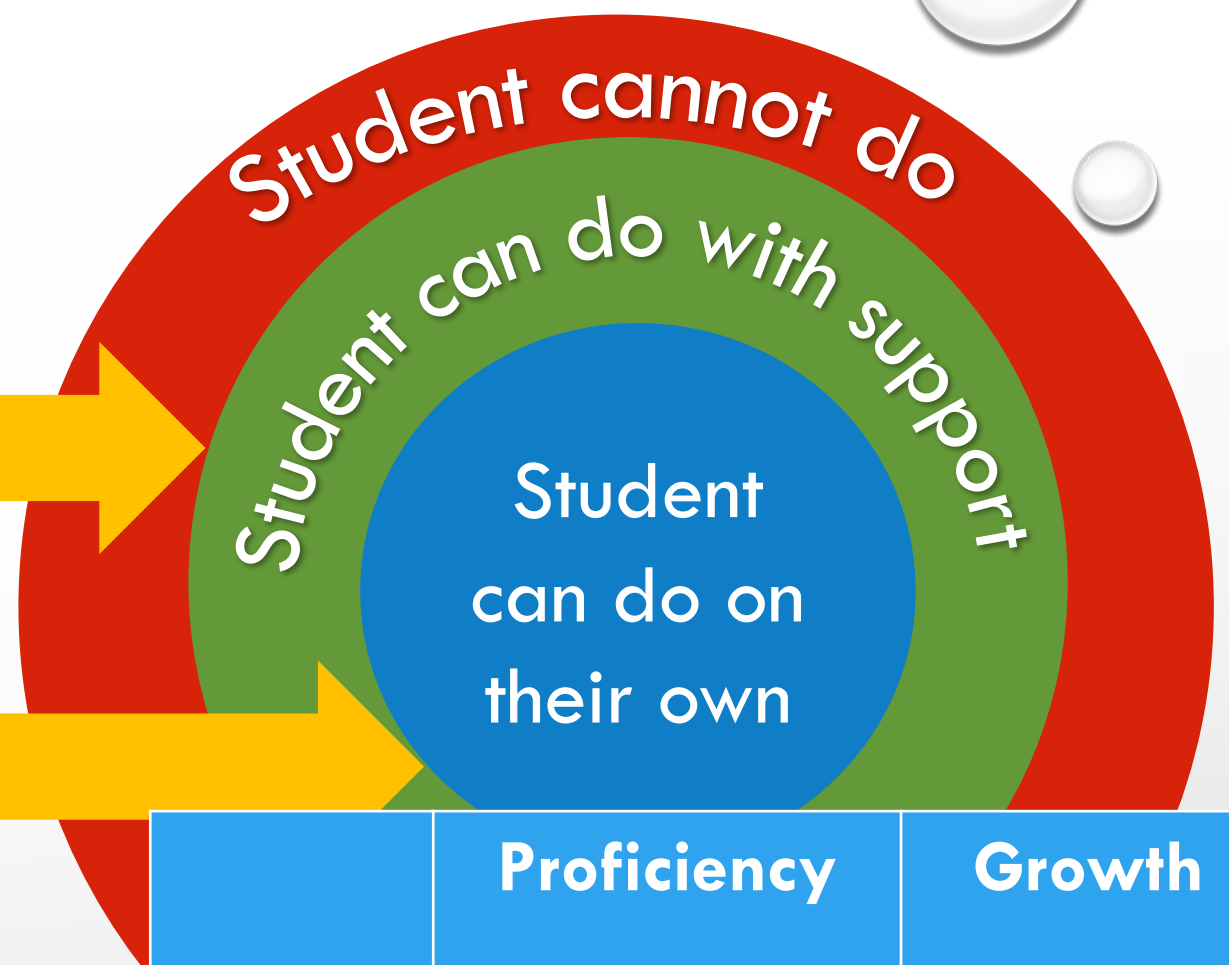


CELEBRATE FAILURE







STEP 2

MODELING PRACTICES
OF PRODUCTIVE FAILURE



- TEACHER TRANSPARENCY
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO FAIL
- EMPHASIZE GROWTH OVER PROFICIENCY

| | Proficiency | Growth |
|----------------|---|---|
| Strong student |  |  |
| Weak student |  |  |



MUSICAL



EMOTIONAL



SOCIAL

STEP 3

EXPLICITLY TEACHING
COPING STRATEGIES
FOR FAILURE



MUSICAL STRATEGIES

Identify

Describe

Diagnose

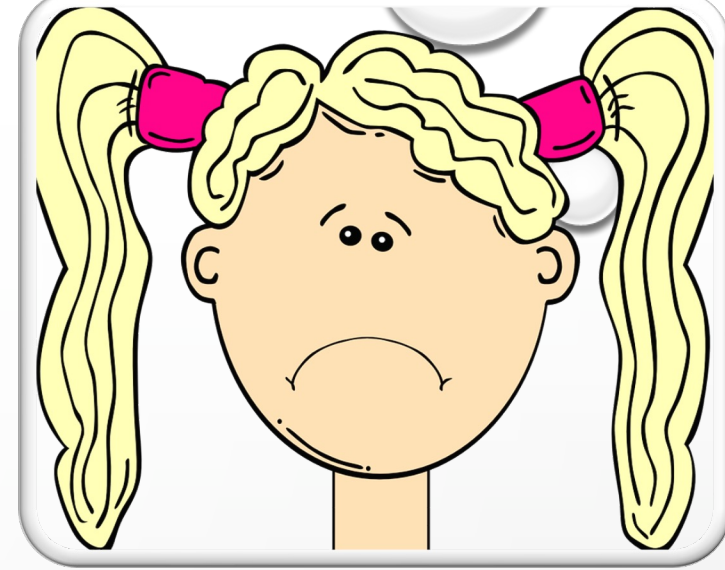
Strategize

Model Targeted Strategies

Guided Practice

Independent Practice

EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES



Appropriateness

👍 Disappointment

"You're still not there yet."

👎 Anger

"You just suck."

Recognition

👍 Frustration

"But I've worked so hard."

👎 Hopelessness

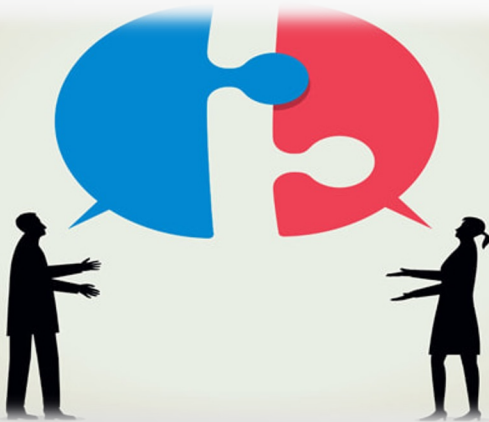
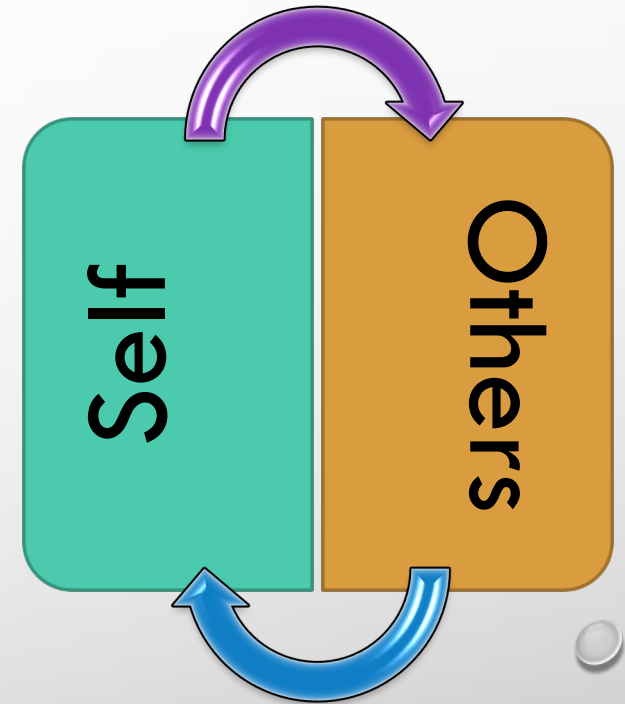
"I've wasted all my hard work."

- Language
- Action
- Mindset



SOCIAL STRATEGIES


Failure as
Acknowledgement
Partners for Change
Collaborators





MONDAY MORNING STRATEGIES

- FORMAL AND INFORMAL SELF-REFLECTION
 - FAILURE LISTS
 - OPEN REHEARSAL PLANNING
 - DECENTRALIZED REHEARSAL

 - DEMONSTRATION CONCERTS
- 

by Brian N. Weidner ^{ID} and Ellen Skolar

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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Teaching for a FAIL (First Attempt In Learning) in the Ensemble Classroom

Abstract: Failure is a common experience in the lives of musicians and educators that is frequently seen as a negative attribute for performances in music education. By shifting from a negative, destructive approach to a positive, constructive orientation to failure, music educators can help their students learn and advance forward from experiences of failure toward success. This approach requires the creation of a classroom environment that allows failure to be accepted and transparent and focuses on a growth mindset regarding student success and failure. This article presents instructional strategies that model and support the growth of effective practices for coping with failure socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

Keywords: classroom environment, growth, failure, lifelong learning, mindset, music education, success

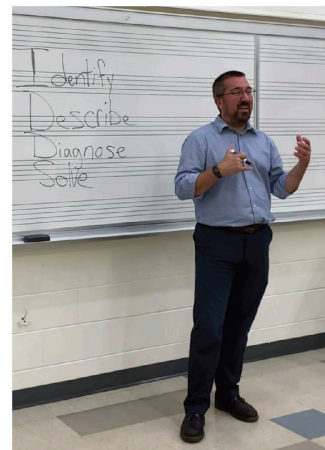


Photo of Brian N. Weidner is by Becky Marsh.



Photo of Ellen Skolar is by Beth Miller.

Failure can be just one step toward learning success. The techniques described in this article may change your outlook—and your students' willingness to take musical risks.

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