



ENTRE**COMP**EDU

## Module 4: Assessment

### Go Deeper 4.3 Celebrating progress and achievement

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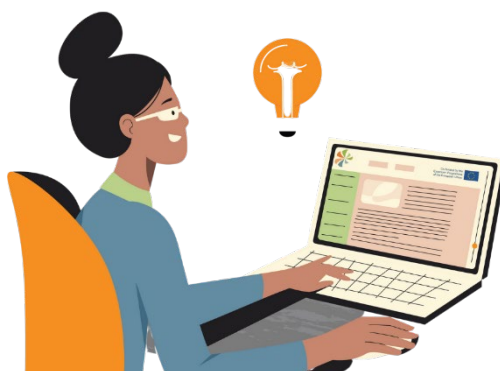


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## Celebrating progress and achievement

The way in which teachers handle students' errors makes a big difference to their success. One famous study of mathematics lessons found that Japanese teachers used errors as teaching points whereas American teachers tended to ignore errors.<sup>1</sup> Japanese students continue to consistently outperform those in America. A more recent study in Singapore found value in 'productive failure' when teachers first allowed students to 'have a go' and then stepped in to help when students failed to solve problems. In the longer run, these students outperformed those students who were helped at each stage by teachers.<sup>2</sup> And so given the importance of initiative and taking risks to entrepreneurship, it is important that teachers build a climate in which making mistakes is viewed as learning opportunities. The big caveat with embracing errors as a means of instruction is ensuring that students develop the emotional resilience to respond to mistakes flexibly.

Lessons can be learned from Sir Dave Brailsford's concept of marginal gains. When he became performance director of British Cycling, he focused on improving performance by breaking down the objective of winning a race into small steps. He believed that if it were possible to make a 1% improvement in a range of areas, the cumulative gains would end up being very significant. By experimenting in a wind tunnel, for example, he noted that the bike was not sufficiently aerodynamic. By analysing the mechanics area in the team truck, he discovered that dust was accumulating on the floor, undermining bike maintenance. Hence, he had the floor painted pristine white, in order to spot any impurities. He introduced antibacterial hand gel to cut down on infections. Brailsford saw these small details not as weaknesses but opportunities for

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1 Stevenson, H. and Stigler, J.W. (1994) *Learning Gap: Why Our Schools are Failing and What We Can Learn From Japanese and Chinese Education*. Simon and Schuster.

2 Kapur, M. and Bielaczyc, K. (2011) 'Designing for Productive Failure', *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 21(1), 45-83.



marginal gain. The team had clear targets and they worked progressively towards achieving these. When Brailsford started out, his approach was ridiculed. But within a few years Brailsford's Team Sky captured 16 Olympic Gold medals and dominated the Tour De France.<sup>3</sup>

This example illustrates how you might use 'success criteria' (what students need to do to achieve the objective) and 'skills ladders' (visibly indicating their rung of progress) with students so that they can chart their progress and enact small wins. Take the entrepreneurial competence of working well together. Claxton et al suggest three steps in developing skills ladders for collaboration.<sup>4</sup>

Step 3            understanding and improving leadership behaviours

Step 2            understanding and improving collective behaviours

Step 1            understanding and improving the individual group work behaviours

You might refer to EntreComp to create your own skills ladders linked to the relevant competences and progression levels, that you want students to focus on. The wording for each rung of the ladder might be adapted to make this age appropriate.

Carol Dweck's research on growth mindsets has, over many years, shown how students can respond to mistakes and challenges in a positive way, if teachers are skilled at feedback and support. She found, for example, that a simple technique of using the words 'yet' or 'not yet' had a powerful influence on students who believed that they could not do something.

What really matters is developing a climate in which students are not fearful of making mistakes. The American writer John Holt highlighted in *How Children Fail* that children from a young age learn to give the answers they think teachers want

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<sup>3</sup> Syed, M. (2015) *Black Box Thinking: The Surprising Truth About Success*

<sup>4</sup> Claxton, G. et al (2011) *Building Learning Power*, TLO, p.108.



in a kind of answer-pulling, fishing trip.<sup>5</sup> They learn to see errors as bad. In contrast, the notion of 'brilliant failure'<sup>6</sup> in an entrepreneurial sense is seen as positive. This is why one of the greatest challenges in teaching and assessing entrepreneurial competences is getting to grips with the iterative relationship between success and failure.

And in the history of humankind, some of the most important advances and discoveries have occurred by accident when scientists have dwelt on errors rather than dismissed them.<sup>7</sup>



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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://www.schoolofeducators.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/HOW-CHILDREN-FAIL-JOHN-HOLT.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Paul Iske, founder of the Institute of Brilliant Failures, promotes better understanding of the complexity of innovation and entrepreneurship. Viagra, the successful treatment for erectile dysfunction, is perhaps one of the best-known examples of brilliant failures though perhaps not one to share readily with students. <https://www.supplychainmovement.com/paul-iske-institute-brilliant-failures-speak-innowate/>

<sup>7</sup> Even evidence of the universe's origin was stumbled across and only after brilliant scientists ignored their first reaction that their telescope was broken. Johnson, S. (2010) *Where Good Ideas come from*, London: Penguin, p.139.



## Activity

### The Power of Yet

The Power of Yet:

Particularly nice if you teach young children (but interesting for any educator!), watch this Sesame Street video (based on Dweck's ideas) which refers to the 'power of yet': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLeUvZvuvAs> (auto-translate settings available) How might this be applied to encouraging their sense of adventure?



You may also like to watch Dweck's original TED talk on the power of yet, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2lc>



## Activity

### Am I Wrong

Listen to the lyrics of 'Am I Wrong' by Nico and Vinz. What message can you take to inform how you assess students' entrepreneurial competences?

Link to YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBmEJZofz2s>



Lyrics:

*Am I wrong for thinking out the box from where I stay?*

*Am I wrong for saying that I'll choose another way?*

*I ain't trying to do what everybody else doing*

*Just cause everybody doing what they all do*

*If one thing I know, how far would I grow?*

*I'm walking down this road of mine, this road that I call home*

*So am I wrong for thinking that we could be something for real?*

*Now am I wrong for trying to reach the things that I can't see?*

*But that's just how I feel, that's just how I feel*

*That's just how I feel trying to reach the things that I can't see*





*Am I tripping for having a vision?  
My prediction, I'mma be on the top of the world  
Hope you, hope you don't look back, always do what you decide  
Don't let them control your life, that's just how I feel  
Fight for yours and don't let go, don't let them compare you, no  
Don't worry, you're not alone, that's just how we feel*

*So am I wrong for thinking that we could be something for real?  
Now am I wrong for trying to reach the things that I can't see?  
But that's just how I feel, that's just how I feel  
That's just how I feel trying to reach the things that I can't see*

*If you tell me I'm wrong, wrong  
I don't wanna be right, right  
If you tell me I'm wrong, wrong  
I don't wanna be right*

*So am I wrong for thinking that we could be something for real?  
Now am I wrong for trying to reach the things that I can't see?  
But that's just how I feel, that's just how I feel  
That's just how I feel trying to reach the things that I can't see*

*Songwriters: Abdoulie Jallow / Nicolay Sereba / Vincent Dery / William Wiik Larsen*

*Am I Wrong lyrics © Warner Chappell Music, Inc, BMG Rights Management, Shapiro  
Bernstein & Co. Inc.*



## Activity

### Marginal gains

How could you make use of the ideas around 'marginal gains' in your own assessment?

