

Failure Ta-Da!

This game is designed to help students embrace and even celebrate failure. So often we are afraid to try new things because we do not want to fail, or, worse, we believe failure means we can never be good at something. This project helps students see failure as a “Frequent Attempt In Learning” (F.A.I.L.).

Kindness Concept(s)

Courage, Kindness

Project Timeframe

25-30 minutes

Required Materials

☐ No required materials

First, explain to students that you are going to talk about what prevents us from being courageous: the thought of failing. Discuss with students that failure should actually be seen as an opportunity to improve and to reach a goal! Most, if not all, successful people have experienced failure in their lives. They kept going, though, and reached their goals because they saw failure as a “Frequent Attempt In Learning” (FAIL). So, failure is not something to be feared but something to be expected, accepted, and celebrated! It means you can do better next time!

Check students' understanding of this with a quick formative show of hands, head nods or other affirmation, and then move on to the activity.

Have students stand in a large circle and think about something they tried and made a mistake or failed at. This should be something fairly minor (not getting an A on a test or not making a team they tried out for or missing a note in their music recital). Or, if students are not comfortable sharing a real event, they can make something up. Give everyone a few minutes to think of something, you included!

Then, going first, model what students will do next. One at a time (either around the circle or “popcorn style” where people jump in at random), they state, as loudly and proudly as they can, what they messed up or failed at. This should be brief, without long explanation; just the statement (e.g., “I sang a solo at the choir concert and forgot some of the words!”). When they are done, the whole circle claps and cheers wildly. The person in the center takes a deep bow and returns to his/her place. Then the next person goes.

Wrap Up:

Bring students back to a calm state and have them sit down in their circle or in their desks. Ask students how it felt to get applause after confessing a failure.

Invite student response.

Ask how many have tried or will try the thing they failed at again. End on a group affirmation of the acronym for fail: Frequent Attempt In Learning

Proposed Lesson Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn the acronym FAIL: Frequent Attempt In Learning
- Practice embracing failure as an opportunity for success.

Extension Activity:

- Share examples of well-known individuals who “failed” at something before succeeding. Albert Einstein, J. K. Rowling, and Oprah Winfrey are some examples. You can find others here:
<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/15-highly-successful-people-who-failed-their-way-success.html>



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>