

In Praise of the Error

(Why it is important to make mistakes)

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1 In general about the error

- 1 In general about the error
- 2 Consequences

In Praise of the Error

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If this is true: How does this influence my teaching?

Question

Error

- ▶ How do you feel, when you commit a mistake?
- ▶ How do you feel, when you are in error?

Question

Error

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- ▶ How do you feel, when you are in error?

bad, angry, shame, caught, ...

The »Oooops-Moment«

We have no feeling of committing a mistake.

The named feelings only occur,

when we recognise a mistake or error.

The »Oooops-Moment«

The moment we realize, that we have made a mistake.

Play dead

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True, but no way to improve on anything.

Traditional assessment of errors

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In addition to the subject matter, it teaches:

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- ▶ Making something »wrong« is usually associated with disadvantages.

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This is an evil and wrong lesson!

Consequences of that hidden curriculum: Who am I?

So, we don't want to be wrong, we want to be right.

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A successful life

We are told and we learn, that to master life means,
that we must **not make mistakes.**

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We want to be right and like that feeling,
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Consequences of that hidden curriculum: Being right

We want to be right and like that feeling,
but it is self-affirming and mostly not real.

We believe, we are right and that our beliefs accurately
reflect the world.

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Function of the fault

»Memento moriendum esse«
Remember that you are mortal!

How do people develop skills?



Function of the fault

The error gives us feedback about our actual level of knowledge.

How does progress and knowledge emerge?

- ▶ In science by thesis and refutation
- ▶ in (too) complex contexts by *try and (you guessed it) error*. Not everything can be captured in a closed formula. Experimentation is needed here (e.g. battery development, spray nozzles).

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Trial and Error

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The error shows us ways to the solution and warns us against going astray.

Summary: Benefits of making mistakes

Errors, Failure, Mistakes are part of the learning process.

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Consequence: Create a safe space

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Judging an error is good, judging a person is bad

Never judge a person, always judge a way of playing.

Consequence: Create a safe space

Teacher role

Never allow a student to evaluate another student.

The teacher is the only one who may evaluate.

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Teacher role

Never allow a student to evaluate another student.

The teacher is the only one who may evaluate.

Stand behind the one who made the mistake.

This is not a technique, but an attitude.

Celebrate the identified mistake as a Win/Win-Situation

The »Lerngeschenk« »Learning Gift«

Hooray, we found this bug, so we are one step closer to perfection.

I deliberately call this a »learning gift« to counteract the negative connotation of »mistake« with the positive meaning of »gift«.

Encourage to fail

Failure ergo sum

»I fail, therefore I am.«

Encourage students to guess and try, so that they can also experience the consequences.

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♠ AD2

♥ AK7

♦ AK876

♣ 82



♠ 73

♥ 64

♦ 52

♣ AK76543

How do you play 3 SA with the lead of ♥Q?

Good Errors, bad Errors

Example construction

Create your example hands in such a way, that a mistake necessarily leads to failure and only correct playing leads to success.

If necessary, explain the difference between successful play and correct play.

Errors as differential diagnostic tools

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The error shows us, what still needs to be explained.

♠ XXX
♥ 10XXX
♦ XXX
♣ XXX



	West	Nord	Ost	Süd
i)	2♦(2)	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
ii)	3♦(?)	Pass	2♣(sf)	2♠

(1) semiforcing (2) Puppet/Relais

What does the error show us?

So many mistakes, so little time

Make a selection

Consider which errors you work on and which you ignore, because they are not helpful for the student.

Focus on one/few significant errors.

Do not overburden the student.

Example: »Art of Declarer Play«

Bourke/Corfield, p. 4-7

♠ AK102

♥ 10763

♦ 652

♣ 94

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ QJ7653

♥ A4

♦ AKJ

♣ K2

West	Nord	Ost	Süd
1 SA(1)	Pass	2 ♦(2)	X(3)
Pass (4)	Pass	2 ♥	2 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

(1) 12–14

(2) Transfer

(3) 15+

(4) keine 3 Cœur

West leads ♥K (duck) and follows with ♥Q . Your turn!

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»Solution 1:« cash all tricks, lose ♥K, ♦Q, ♣AQ.

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»Solution 2:« Finesse ♦Q, losing ...

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»Solution 3:« Endplay West with ♦Q, losing when East holds ♦Q.

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West leads ♥K (duck) and follows with ♥Q . Your turn!

Solution: Endplay West with ♣A.

Celebrate your identified mistakes

May your students gift you abundantly
with many creative mistakes.

Thank you for your
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— The End —

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