

1135-H5-3089

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Productive Failures: From Class Requirement to Fostering a Peer-led Support Group.

Mistakes occur frequently in mathematics. In two classes (Abstract Algebra and Calculus II), mistakes were brought to the forefront in the form of a “productive failure.” Through five interviews with students, we initially looked for affectual responses to the pedagogical allowance and student-led demonstration. Many of the responses, both benefits and drawbacks of the productive failure, were interpreted by the research group to resemble peer-led support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Descriptions of both productive failure and support groups, as well as quotes from the students, aim to shed light on psychological benefits of valuing mistakes. (Received September 26, 2017)