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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The author argues that we need failure as much as success to learn from our mistakes and improve our performance in many areas. What does she mean by this? How can an educator help students recognize the importance of failing at something when they live in a society that is almost solely focused on success and achievement?
2. The article suggests that our current understanding of success is too narrow and that a new definition is required. How does the author think we should redefine our ideas about success? What specifically does she say we should do in education?
3. How have you been affected by rankings and ratings in your estimation of success? In a 21st-century-society, have you grown accustomed to seeing how others rate something to determine whether or not it has value to you? What examples of rankings and ratings can you think of that have influenced your beliefs in certain areas? How much influence do these rankings or ratings have on your assessment of success?

Using Student Assessment Data to Improve Instruction

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ABSTRACT: *The authors describe an innovative course at the Harvard Graduate School of Education that places graduate students and public school teachers on school-based teams and asks them to solve real problems using real student data. Key features and goals of the workshop are outlined, as are the various methods that were used to address educational improvement, which included an emphasis on the complexity of school reform. Workshop participants were taught to interpret and use data in effective reform initiatives that highlight the importance of pursuing educational change in the context of school-based teams.*

State accountability systems that are based on test data and the No Child Left Behind Act have put educators under great pressure to improve their students' scores on standardized tests. Much has been written about the possibility that school faculties will resort to "drill and kill," a response that will reduce the quality

of children's education. Much less has been written about what it takes for teachers and administrators to be able to use student assessment results to learn about children's skills and about the effectiveness of instruction—and then to use that learning to guide instructional improvements.