The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes
by Mark Prett and Gary Rubinstein

Synopsis: A young girl named Beatrice is known all around town as “The Girl Who Never Makes Mistakes”. She does everything perfectly, and has adoring fans who expect perfection from her. Beatrice is happy with the way her life is. At least, that’s what she thinks. One day in home ec class, she almost drops eggs – She almost makes her first mistake. This almost mistake weighs heavily on Beatrice. She begins to avoid fun activities because she’s afraid that she will make a mistake. The night of the talent show, Beatrice is terrified of making a mistake. In the middle of her act, the unthinkable happens; she makes a mistake. Beatrice chooses to laugh about her silly mistake. From then on, Beatrice sees the value in imperfection. She lets loose and has fun with her little brother and her friends. She learns to do new things. She is figuratively and literally freed from the pressure she felt from herself and others to never make mistakes.

The Growth Mindset: This book relates to the growth mindset because Beatrice learns that mistakes are okay. She frees herself to new experiences because she no longer feels the pressure to be perfect. Mistakes lead to her ability to learn – learn to be original, learn to have fun, learn to skate.

Relating to the Curriculum: This book could be used to compare and contrast characters. Students can contrast Beatrice with her little brother, Carl. Students could also tell how Beatrice’s character traits changed from the beginning to the end of the book.

Lesson Plan

Introduction:
Ask students to think about a time that they made a mistake. Have them write their feelings about the mistake on a piece of paper and fold it in half. Collect the papers and share the emotional reactions with the class. Separate these feelings into positive and negative feelings. Determine if there are more positive feelings or negative feelings. Discuss why that might be.

Tell the students that they will be reading a book called The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes. Ask students to think if it’s possible for someone to never make a mistake. Have the students predict if the girl will eventually make a mistake. Record the yes/no answers on the board as a tally chart.

Show the students the cover of the book. What is the girl doing? What might happen? What could happen if “The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes” would actually flub up during her juggling act?

Read the Book:
Read the book aloud and ask questions as you read.

How is Beatrice perfect at the beginning of the story? (She dresses perfectly with matching socks, she gives her hamster his favorite food, she makes a perfectly proportionate peanut butter and jelly sandwich, she uses good manners, she did her chores and homework, she’s prepared for the talent show.)

How do you think Beatrice feels being perfect all the time? (She appears to be happy. She might be busy, but it looks like she likes it that way.)
How is Beatrice’s little brother, Carl different from Beatrice? (He makes lots of mistakes, he loves to make mistakes, he does things his own creative way.) Would you rather be like Beatrice or Carl? Why?

What do you think will happen as Beatrice is flying through the air as she falls with the eggs?

Was your prediction correct?

How does Beatrice’s “almost mistake” affect her? (She keeps thinking about it, it holds her back from doing other things (skating) because she’s afraid of making a mistake, she doesn’t have an appetite for dinner, she’s worried about the talent show)

What were people’s reaction to seeing Beatrice on stage? (They expect perfection.) How would it make you feel if everyone expected perfection from you all the time?

What do you think it means that the specks falling out of the salt shaker weren’t white? (It was pepper.) What can you predict might happen next? (Beatrice might sneeze from the pepper and make a mistake)

How do you think Beatrice will react to her big mistake? (She might run off the stage, she might cry, she might laugh, etc.)

What was Beatrice’s reaction to the mistake? (She laughed, she saw the humor in it)

What changed for Beatrice because of her mistake? (She slept better than she ever had, she decided to wear mismatched socks to be fun, she creative a messy and fun lunch with Carl, she went skating with her friends, she seems to be happier now)

Reflect on the book/Closure:

Ask the students:

Did Beatrice show a fixed or growth mindset at the beginning of the story? How do you know? (She showed a fixed mindset because she avoided mistakes. She was afraid to put effort into something because she might not be successful at first.) Think about Beatrice’s talent show act. We know that she juggled for three years in a row. This could also show a fixed mindset – she didn’t want to try something new because it might be difficult at first and she might make a mistake or not win the talent show.

How did Beatrice’s mindset begin to change after her mistake? (She wasn’t afraid of making mistakes, she learned from her mistake – learned to not take everything so seriously, she tried new things even though she might fail at first.)

Did you notice how no fans were outside to greet Beatrice the day after the talent show? Beatrice is freed from other people’s expectations for her to be perfect. How do you think this feels for her? (She might be relieved, she doesn’t feel that everyone is watching her all the time anymore, she doesn’t feel responsible for being perfect all the time)

What lesson can we learn from Beatrice? (It’s okay to make mistakes as long as we learn from them, trying new and challenging tasks can open us up to great experiences and grow our brains.)