



Music Ed Insights



Key Insights from...

Julie Ressler on Imposter Phenomenon: When Great Teachers Secretly Feel Like Frauds

IP is common among competent, high-achieving people - including men.

- It's a phenomenon, not a defect, and often appears when we step into big roles or break gender norms (e.g., women in major HS band jobs, men in elementary general).
- Women report IP more often, but men with IP may react more strongly to criticism and accountability.
- If you care, prepare, and push yourself, IP is likely to visit. Its presence says more about your standards than your actual competence.

Let evidence challenge the story in your head.

- IP feeds on harsh inner scripts ("I'm faking it," "I don't belong here") rather than facts. Let curriculum drive literature:
- Julie uses a "kudos"/evidence file—saved emails, notes, and wins—to counter those distorted beliefs.
- When "I'm a fraud" pops up, ask: "What hard evidence says otherwise?" Keep that evidence close, and remember you're shaping your students' inner scripts, too.

Talk about it – with the right people.

- About 70% of people report IP at some point. Trusted peers, friends, or counselors usually say "me too," not "what's wrong with you?"
- It's often better to process IP with peers or professionals than to dump raw insecurity on your evaluator.
- Pick 1-2 trusted people and practice saying, "Here's what I'm afraid of." Let them mostly listen and ask small questions. IP loses a lot of power once it's spoken out loud and examined.

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