

2 x 10 Making Connections, Building Relationships

The 2x10 strategy is simple: spend 2 minutes per day for 10 days talking with an at-risk student about anything she or he wants to talk about.

Research

Raymond Wlodkowski did extensive observations of student behavior, cataloguing student time in and out of seat as well as the types, instances, and severity of student disruptions. Wlodkowski found an 85-percent improvement in student's behavior. In addition, he found that the behavior of all the other students in the class improved.

Best Practice?

Although many people recognize that this is just best practice, a large majority of educators admit that they struggle to build a rapport with their most challenging kids.

2 x 10 turns that abstract, overwhelming, where-do-I-start concept of relationship building into something easily manageable with an immediate payoff for everyone involved.

I don't have time to talk individually with students.

Relationship building works best when it happens naturally and authentically! You don't have to stop everything you are doing to talk: just look for and seize opportunities during the school day.

Chat as you're walking students to lunch, or waiting for busses to be called at dismissal. Talk briefly while students are cleaning up and transitioning into the next activity. When you're starting or ending small group instruction, take a moment to talk casually. When you're assisting a student one-on-one, say, "By the way, ___" and extend the conversation into a topic of interest to the child.

Another—and much bolder—approach is to use your instructional time for relationship building and do so unapologetically. Think about it—how many minutes a day are you spending on those off-task behavior discussions? Why not spend 2 pro-active minutes

I don't know what to ask or how to start the conversation.

Observe the child and look for insights into his or her personality. Pay attention to what the child talks about with friends and the topics she writes about for assignments. What can you tell about the child's personality and interests from the photos on her notebook or the after-school activities he joins?

Try to make authentic connections between the child's interests and your own. It only takes one common interest to start building a relationship. If you can't find one, ask the student with curiosity, to tell you about one of their interests.

Also notice what the child does NOT enjoy and try to relate on that level, too. If you can genuinely be the "odd man out" with a student, a surprisingly strong bond might be formed.

The student doesn't want to talk to me.

You are the teacher and therefore will have to interact throughout the day, and if you don't pursue relationship building, chances are good that the majority of your interactions will be impersonal/academic or negative...which means the chasm between the two of you will only grow wider.

A full 2 minute conversation might not be possible at first. Don't give up. Try for one short, non-work-related, positive interaction a day, and build on that until you're having a full-fledged conversation on a regular basis. Making the effort to get to know a student and showing that you care is never a waste, even when you don't see results right away.

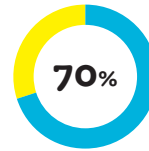
preventing the problems from occurring by building a rapport with challenging kids? Get the rest of the class involved in a warm-up activity or other independent assignment and start a quiet individual conversation. If you don't have to stop your lesson 10 times afterwards to deal with misbehavior, you'll actually accomplish a lot more.

A focus on **social-emotional wellbeing** in schools improves student success in school and life

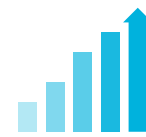
1 Mental health issues are prominent in school-aged youth



An estimated **1/6** Canadian youth live with mental illness



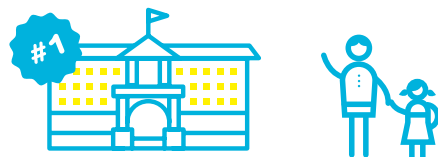
70% of mental illnesses manifest during childhood or adolescence



In Canada, evidence suggests **childhood mental health problems are increasing over time**

2 Schools are an ideal setting to influence social and emotional wellbeing

Schools are the **number 1 setting** to promote wellbeing among children and youth.



Schools can promote wellbeing for students through:

- Promoting a **culture & climate** that fosters wellbeing
- Developing **trusting relationships** between **students & staff**
- Developing student's **social and emotional skillsets**
- Promoting **staff wellbeing**

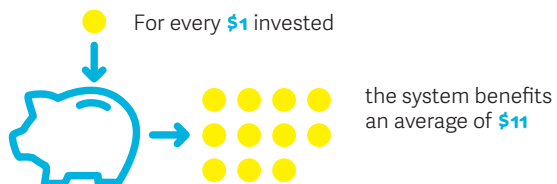
3 Investing in quality programming can prevent emotional and behavioural problems



Reduces bullying, violence, and conduct problems



Reduces the incidence of anxiety, depression, and suicide



4 Social-emotional wellbeing in the classroom improves academic, personal and social skills



An emphasis on SEWB during school hours leads to an **11% improvement** in **academic performance** and enables students to:



be better **communicators**



become **effective leaders** and **self-advocators**



develop into **resilient** individuals



be **caring, concerned** members of their communities