

**Video Transcript**  
**Adapted Webinar: Unlocking the power of the Relationship: Growing Social-  
Emotional Skills in Students with LDs**

**By Colin King**  
**2016 Educators' Institute**

**[Narrator]:** This webinar was adapted from a keynote address delivered at the LD@school Educators' Institute in 2016. The LD@school team is pleased to present the session: Unlocking the power of the Relationship - Growing Social-Emotional Skills in Students with LDs presented by Dr. Colin King.

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**[Colin King]:** Today I'd like to wrap up our conference with talking about a topic that's near and dear to my heart. And that's about supporting the social and emotional lives of our students with LD. It's a real privilege to be able to talk about this because in my work as a psychologist, both from an assessment lens and clinically when I'm working therapeutically with youth, I get a brief window there hearing about some of their pain, frustrations. But also the resilience that comes out of that. So it's a privilege to be able to kind of share and talk about some of that today.

First I'd like to start off with a bit of a short letter here. It goes, "I don't know why you wanted to hear more from me, but here it goes. Everybody just doesn't get it that I'm so exhausted with everything. I work so hard and for so long and what do I end up with? Marks in the 50s, frustrated parents, and some teachers who think I'm slacking off. I want to move on in my life, but to what? To college where the anxiety and stress will be 100 times worse? Don't even get me started on my social life because it's non-existent. I just want to be a normal, boy-crazy, outrageous teenager; not depressed and suicidal all the time."

That was a note that one of my clients, Brittany -- and I've changed her name just to protect her confidentiality -- that she wrote to me, as her Learning Support teacher and I had been really trying to



engage Brittany over several months. She was really struggling in Grade 11 in the high school setting. And this was really the first opportunity where she was able to convey and provide an outlet to some of that kind of frustration. And in a lot of the social and emotional difficulties that she was struggling with. I've kept this, and this is probably about eight or nine years old now, just as a reminder for me about what that daily, practical, day-to-day experience can be like for our students with learning disabilities. For Brittany and many others of our students, it's sometimes very hard to get in. Like Brittany; she put up a lot of walls. It took lots of attempts for us to be able to kind of chip away, for her to be able to trust that we can share and hear some of that pain and be a holder for that for you. That we want to hear more about your journey and support you with where you're at. So that's kind of the challenge that I'm going to kind of put out to you today.

And the remainder of this talk here is, How are you going to break down those walls for some of our students like Brittany? Or some of our younger students there? Because it's a safer place to be. Before I get a little bit more into the bulk of my talk, which is really around supporting that teacher-student relationship, I want to talk a little bit about some of the other realities that our youth with learning disabilities face. We know that 40% of them might be struggling with mental health issues. Like Brittany; like anxiety and depression. We know that three out of four might be struggling with related social and peer issues. So that's kind of the context and the reality of their lives here. But that's where that student-teacher relationship comes in. And pretty much kind of across the board, that positive teacher relationship is connected to almost every educational outcome that we have. And looking at the list here: improved academics, engagement, attendance, social skills, and the suggestion that there's even a long-term impact. That the connection and relatedness of a student with their teacher in kindergarten can predict how well they're doing in high school even.

So there's a real powerful connection piece here that we're going to be talking more about. But as we're thinking about this teacher-student relationship, we need to kind of contextualise. So what is it about that relationship that makes a difference? And how --? What is it about that impact in the context of all the other impacts that we have in education? You know, there are so many factors and variables from a student level, to teacher level, to school level, to curriculum level factors there, How do we make sense of actually where this teacher-student relationship fits? Where does its, kind of, impact, kind of really come in? And that's where I'll introduce John Hattie. This is probably a familiar name to, kind of, many of you in the crowd here. John Hattie is an educational researcher who's very interested in measurement in educational impact. And he wrote some very, kind of, influential books beginning in 2009 around visible learning. That was updated in 2011, and then most recently in 2015. In 2009, John Hattie, he wanted to kind of make sense of, again, across all these thousands of educational studies, What are those factors that make the most impact? And when we think about a term called "meta-analyses," meta-analyses are studies that look at often, kind of, hundreds of other studies. What John Hattie did was he did meta-analyses of meta-analyses. So he took 800 meta-analyses that had been done in the educational field to look at, again, What is the impact of these relative factors? At the time in 2009, included over 50,000 studies and over 200 million students. So an incredible, kind of, sample size there.



What John was able to do was he looked at all the range of various impacts and factors there that the average effect size -- and I'll talk a little bit more about that in a second -- came out as 0.4. So Hattie talked about 0.4 effect size as kind of that average effect. That kind of hinge point at which, kind of, half the effects were stronger than that, half that were kind of weaker.

So if we look at, kind of, on a 0-1 scale effect size -- again, 0.0 to 1.0 -- we can see a range of impact from kind of having no effect on student learning at 0, potentially having minimal impact in the lesser amounts. Or greater than 0.4, which is having a significant acceleration for the students. So being able to significantly impact their academics. So you can almost think of it as kind of akin to, kind of, a speedometer on your car there, that as the faster you're going -- or in this case, the larger the effect size -- the greater the impact on the student's academic success. So let's have a look here. When we're thinking about that student-teacher relationship and where that kind of falls. So what I've done here is just for a bit of, kind of, context sakes, is I've also included some other factors here that we know are kind of important in education and in student achievement. So classroom management, early intervention, distance education, family structure, setting challenging goals, teaching testing skills. And then finally that teacher-student relationship. So let's have a look here to just to kind of contextualize, again, the impact of this relationship. So the first two, classroom management, early intervention, we know that these are important things. We talk a lot about this in some of our work. So out of 150 possible factors, classroom management came out 42nd there. So an effect size of 0.52. Early intervention is just a little bit lower ranking at the 52nd. An effect size of 0.47. So again, going back to John Hattie's work there, these are significant effects. These are very strong effect sizes. Let's look at the next two here. Distance education and family structure. So again, What type of structure? Is it a single parent, two-parent, blended family? Distance education. So how many people have done distance education before? It's hard. It's hard to stay motivated; it's hard to be connected sometimes. In John Hattie's work it came out as a very low effect size there, 0.09. Same with family structure. A quite minimal kind of impact on achievement, ranking at 113th. Let's look at another two here. Setting challenging goals for students. Again, we're getting kind of a more powerful effect here. Up to the 34th ranking out of 150; an effect size of 0.56. And teaching test-taking skills. You know, got a much more mild effect there, 0.27 and a ranking at the 93rd. Again, out of 150 possible effects. So before we go to this here, perhaps we can get just a little bit of drum roll for, kind of, teacher-student relationships here. So if you can do a little bit of drum roll for me here? The impact of Hattie's work in being able to demonstrate that teacher-student relationship, for me anyways, spoke volumes about what we know from the trenches, from our classes, from our clinical works, and from supporting individual students ranking out of 11. So 11 out of 150. So it's not podium-worthy, but we're doing extremely well here. An effect size of 0.72. So when you leave here today and you go home to your friends and your family, you can tell them that, "I have a statistically-significant impact on student achievement." They love hearing things like that. And if we go back to, again, our speedometer and kind of plot that here, I mean, we're speeding now. Or perhaps even kind of stunt-driving. This is how strong these effects are in relative comparison to all the other ones that I've kind of mentioned there. These are very powerful effects. But I am being a little bit perhaps, kind of, loose with some of the, kind of, results here because there's one



kind of key underlying word there that I kind of haven't mentioned. And again, it's kind of relationship. Yes, as educators you're getting half that credit there. But it's a dynamic process. It's about that relationship in connection with that other student. What I'd like to do is as we set our, kind of, focus for the rest of the talk here is I would like you to begin to think about our relationships with our students. And what I would like you to do, individually and then at your tables, is I would like you think of a strong teacher-student relationship that you've experienced with a child with a learning disability. And again, perhaps that's not in your role as, kind of, an educator. Perhaps it's more of a support staff or administrator. But I'd like you to think of, again, a relationship you've had with a child with a learning disability that you would perceive as being, kind of, quite strong. And I want you to kind of think about that and think about that question of, What made that such a positive relationship for you and the student? So if you can do that at your tables there, I'll give you just a couple minutes. Thank you. Okay, well why don't we bring the conversation back here? Because we're going to come back to this just in a couple minutes. So hopefully that got you starting thinking a little bit about, again, this powerful teacher-student relationship that we have. And again, what are those key ingredients though? I bet if I kind of wander to the various tables there, I would hear a lot of diversity about what you believed, kind of, constitutes that kind of positive connection and relationship.

So what is it that really kind of goes together there to make that such a powerful connection? What I would like to propose as we're kind of going through this talk here is that there's, kind of, three key characteristics or foundational elements that as educators we need to bring to our students with learning disabilities. One is they have to experience us and that relationship as safe and trusting. That we are LD-informed. So it's not just at, kind of, a knowledge level about what learning disabilities are, but about that particular child. And what that means and feels like to kind of walk a day in their shoes. And last, at being strength-based. So having that kind of continuous, optimistic outlook and being able to celebrate the other gifts and talents that our students with LDs have. And I will be able to touch base on these as we kind of walk through the presentation here. The first, which I really see as so crucial and paramount, is around that trust and safety. That we have to provide those opportunities for the child to feel secure and comfortable, not only in the classroom but in the relationship with us. Michael Karras yesterday kind of challenged us to kind of tell and communicate to our students about them to not be afraid. I would say we absolutely need to do that. And we need to make it a safe place for them to kind of -- to be able to do that. So students with learning disabilities, they need to know what to expect from the learning process from beginning to end. So let's demystify so that they're not sitting there kind of wondering, anticipating when that particular demand or situation might be that might be difficult for them. They need to know what to expect from other people as well. About other teachers, about peers as well. You know, "What will I reasonably expect will happen in the course of our, kind of, work together?" And furthermore, being able to keep the anxiety low so that it's not impacting learning and performance. We know that anxiety can be a huge barrier to retrieval, recall, being able to show what you know in the moment. So there's so many elements there that are so important about keeping, again, that classroom as that, kind of, safe base for our students with LD. And it connects to a lot of other kind of things we're talking about now around, kind of, trauma-informed classrooms. About



having, you know, mindful moments and deep breathing before tests there. So there's a lot of parallels here that we can kind of leverage for many of our other students as well. I want to talk quickly about stress. And in particular about stress in young children because for me this study really hit home of what that's like for our young ones in kind of a day-to-day kind of situation. So Maureen McQuarrie and her colleagues at -- out in B.C., they were really interested in physiological measures of stress. And in particular its relationship to, kind of, math performance. We know that if anyone's had, kind of, math anxiety before, that that anxiety can have a real detrimental effect in math. So she was really interested in, you know, How does this kind of play out with even our young ones in Grade one? So, kind of, six-year-olds. And what they took as measures as physiological arousal was around saliva samples. So being able to kind of sample for cortisol in that, kind of, saliva is again an indication of stress. So what they did was they had these six-year-olds kind of provide some samples. Again, kind of as being, kind of, a bit of parallel there, kind of, for stress. And looking at, again, how does it impact across various tasks and, kind of, math outcomes. Some of the results I don't think will kind of surprise you that way. So you can see with the two pictures there that we have kind of a low-stress condition -- the baby who's lounging. So it doesn't look -- some pretty low cortisol levels I would assume. And McCully on, kind of, the far right there. So with some high levels. So again, comparing our, kind of, two groups there -- so students with a math learning disability and not. So no, it's not surprising in, kind of, the first condition here that students with a math learning disability had a harder time than those who didn't. Now when we move up to the high-stress and, kind of, reactive condition now, students with no learning disability, they suffered as well. So they were having kind of a tough time. But those who had even, kind of, more detrimental effects across working memory and math performance tasks was again, our students with the math LD.

So even at six years old, we're getting these indications and suggestions there that stress -reactivity -- impacts processing and other kind of cognitive measures their, kind of, math performance. So you can imagine what that would be like, kind of, three years from then, ten years from then. And having all those experiencing there about in the class, again feeling kind of stressed out. So to me that really kind of hit home, again how young these, kind of, conditions and kind of behaviours can start. During my, kind of, graduate education and training there's one quote that always kind of stuck out to me that I've kind of always remembered. And it was, kind of, from Mel Levine talking about kids with learning disabilities. And it goes something like this: "I always tell people that from the moment a kid gets up in the morning until he goes to sleep at night, the central mission of the day is to avoid humiliation at all costs." And I think that kind of rings true for perhaps some of those kids that we kind of support, whether it be, kind of, in special education or in the classroom. Just the extent of some of the behaviours there that seem like non-compliance, but they're really about, kind of, avoidance and trying to avoid the situation, which is so uncomfortable and kind of difficult for them. Has here, "Worrying is my superpower." So for those who can't read it at the back here, worrying is my superpower. Using my powers of pure, concentrated panic and anxiety, I can prevent bad things from happening. Or so I tell myself. So you can imagine, again for our students, if you've got this experience coming up there, of course you would be planning in advance and anticipating, "What is this going to be like? What if this



happens? What if that happens? Will I be able to, kind of, get out of it? What will I, kind of, do in that moment?" So it's no surprise then, again when we're thinking about our students, how those social and emotional skills would be, kind of, very challenging. I want to quickly touch base on this slide. And for me this is kind of one -- I think kind of one of the most illustrative of the experiences of anxiety for students. So on our X-axis here we have, kind of, time. So it's kind of, "Time marches on." On our Y-axis we have anxiety. So starting off there. So as we're kind of climbing up the hill we can see that the anxiety is starting to climb. So probably that was me at about, kind of, nine o'clock this morning. That this was a great idea; why did I sign up to do this? And then we're reaching a bit of a panic peak. For our students with learning disabilities, those who are struggling with anxiety, it's at that moment there where it kind of feels so unbearable, "I can't," kind of, "take this," that often, kind of, one of two things happens. One is they might kind of avoid or take a detour, do something to escape that, kind of, really difficult situation. And I think we can imagine this for a lot of our students. Perhaps it's kind of a book report that the student was going to be doing in front of the class that suddenly they're not there that day. Or a test -- an important test that was coming up and suddenly they're no longer there. So that's kind of one option there is we get out of that, kind of, very stressful situation.

So sometimes we talk about avoidance or escape. In that particular moment when that child's home or out of the class, they get that experience of that anxiety dropping. "Ah, I feel so much better." That would be like if I didn't do this presentation today, if I was out in the hall, "Oh, I feel so much better now" about not doing this. The challenge is that in that particular moment we don't get that experience of what psychologists call "habituation." That getting used to it. I often use that analogy with kids of kind of jumping in a cold pool. That if you, kind of, jump in and you don't get out -- you know, maybe dunk your head, swim a little bit there -- after a couple minutes it feels like it's a little bit warmer. And nothing's changed at all; it's not like they've dumped in buckets of hot water or turned on the heater. It's just that our bodies now become more acclimatized and used to, kind of, that sensation.

So we're not getting that experience when students are getting out of that really difficult situation. And this is not to say that I'm sure there's been times for all of us when we've kind of taken a detour in, kind of, a stressful or anxious situation. That's not, kind of, the point. It's more that over time, when we get stuck in these kind of patterns of behaviors, that that experience of that anxiety dropping can be very reinforcing. It can be very difficult to kind of be sitting with that anxiety at that top of the curve. And sitting with that. So you also see that the green line there that continues from that panic peak and comes down the other side. That is really the experience that we're kind of hoping to promote for our students with anxiety. But in, kind of, very manageable chunks. So again, you can see from that green line there, "Does it go down?" Yup, but it does take a while. So that's ultimately what we'd kind of be trying to promote is again, that kind of "just right" level of anxiety, tolerance, and anxiety exposure in a way that's, kind of, comfortable for the student. This is just a bit of a caution here because I know that whenever I kind of talk about anxiety and doing some of this work, that I'm not expecting teachers to be, kind of, clinicians. I'm not expecting people to go outside their scope of practice there. Because we do know that there kind of are, kind of, risks involved here. So if you can't read this at the back, this is



the far side. "Professor Gallagher and his controversial technique of simultaneously confronting the fear of heights, snakes, and the dark." All right, we don't want that. That's called flooding. And that's a big no-no. And that's why whenever we're doing this type of work we're doing it as a team. But again, it's those microcosm interactions that we can promote in the class therein, kind of, a safe, manageable way there. And sometimes the analogy we use is that kind of "just right" amount, right? Where it's a little bit uncomfortable, but because I have a really good relationship perhaps with Dr. Cunningham here, that I'm going to, kind of, tolerate the sensation and kind of stick it out. So we might be using that, kind of, wave analogy or that "just right" where I can kind of tolerate and it's going to help me build that, kind of, exposure or that habituation. The second characteristic there that we kind of talked about earlier was, again, about being LD-informed. About being able to implement knowledge of the child's unique learning profile into, kind of, programming in the class.

As I mentioned, this is about knowledge at both kind of intellectual/factual level about, you know, perhaps, What is a learning disability in the area of reading and spelling? But also at an experiential level. And I thought Todd did a great job this morning giving us glimpses into that, of what that's like day-in and day-out. Having knowledge of how the various learning demands and tasks over the course of that day or that lesson impact their success. Perhaps it's about all the multiple steps that students might have to be doing as part of a lesson that's really kind of putting that demand on, kind of, their working memory. About being able to know again, you know, this is going to be a real, kind of, difficult point or stage in, kind of, the exercise or instruction for them. And of course knowing what strategies, accommodations, and tools help in collaboration with the student. This absolutely has to be kind of done in collaboration. And there's just a picture there, that York Region Waterfall that you can find at LD@school, which is such a fantastic resource there if you haven't, kind of, seen that before. And lastly we're going to talk about this a little bit more here, but it's about a strength-based perspective. It's about that continuously using a strength-based perspective in thinking about the child. We know from PPM8 made from our definition from our LDAO about learning disabilities that these are kids that have huge potential.

They have great skills in their thinking and reasoning. And we know that they can achieve. Having that strength-based or growth mindset that acknowledges skill growth and celebrates success. That recognises that actually some of those strengths sometimes are actually forged from the challenges. That we may not be able to kind of see that yet, but perhaps that's something that's coming as we're kind of supporting them during those difficult moments. And I think having a strength-based lens is about perhaps being able to create signature, kind of, learning experiences for students. That, you know, this assignment might be, kind of, really challenging even with some of the accommodations and supports. But, you know, we're going to design something else for Johnny here that's really going to, kind of, allow him to show what he knows. And because he's great at being able to do visual presentations and being able to do models in his, kind of, Makerspace. You know? We're going to do something special for him because he's so great at that. Again, it's that continuous, kind of, strength-based perspective that recognises that we might be challenged right now, but that we can kind of grow



from there. And again, a great parallel with our growth mindset discussions. And this is not to say that, again, students with learning disabilities cannot be challenging, right? Because I know that when I kind of go to support my educators in their class and I'm, kind of, met with this face at, kind of, the door there -- I know that this is, kind of, my signal that we need to kind of rally the troops here. That we need to support him or her. And again, getting others on board to again celebrate and then recognise some of those strengths there. Again, this is not strengths in the absence of challenge. It also fits really well with, again, a lot of the movements and discussions we're having now about character strengths, about positive psychology, about the type of person that you are as, kind of, a value and how you, kind of, show that about. You know, reading and writing might be very challenging for you, but, you know, you're very empathetic and sensitive. You're really generous and caring. There's been a lot of writing recently as well around, kind of, the gift of dyslexia. That again, kind of talking about some of those strengths forged from challenges. But also that inherent kind of brain-based differences might actually be setting us up to have skills and assets in, kind of, other areas. Perhaps in, kind of, more of the, kind of, visual spatial realm as well. So again, we know that these are bright kids and they have loads of potential. So what do we focus on then? So if -- again, as educators if we're developing that strong teacher-student connection with those three factors that we talked about, so what do we actually, kind of, focus on then in terms of promoting social and emotional skill growth? Well, in terms of research in this area, we know that it can be, kind of, very challenging. Because we know that resilience is a process. It's not an event.

You don't decide one day, "Okay, I'm going to start becoming resilient now in response to, all this kind of stress I've been under." We know that longitudinal follow-up can be challenging. So it's often while we'll use qualitative, rather, kind of, retrospective studies. And random-controlled trials of different conditions are difficult. So we wouldn't think it ethical to be assigning people to, kind of, a warm teacher condition and the teacher who's kind of really crabby. Or the resilient program versus the non-resilient program there, right? That's unethical and we wouldn't, kind of -- something we'd be comfortable with that way. But what I'd like to do is talk a little bit about this one study that was done in 2003 by Roberta Goldberg and some of her colleagues. And some of you may be kind of familiar with this. So it was around understanding success pathways for students with learning disabilities. Looking at predictors of success 20 years after they attended a private school for LD students in the states there. What they were really curious in is, again, What attributes are related to success? And they took, kind of, a broad definition of success. Thinking about, kind of, employment, education. But also a lot of social-emotional factors. Social relationships, family relationships, psychological well-being, life satisfaction. So Goldberg and her colleagues, in terms of going through their qualitative interviews, identified six factors there that they thought significantly distinguished those who were successful versus not successful as adults. First one around self-awareness. We'll talk about these in more depth. Perseverance, proactivity, goal-setting, use of support systems, and emotional coping systems. And I can't think of one factor here that can be developed and nourished and encouraged without having a strong teacher-student relationship. These are not skills and attributes that I believe, kind of, exist and develop on their own. It's done in conjunction with someone else. So if we look a little bit more here at self-awareness. What was that all



about? What do these, kind of, adults do? Well, they are open and aware about their difficulties. They accepted the things that were challenging. They are able to kind of compartmentalise their learning disability. So not, kind of, ignoring it or escaping from it, but just realising that, you know, "This doesn't define me. It's a part of me, but it's not all of me." They were able to recognise their talents. And as young adults, being able to kind of match jobs with their, kind of, abilities. So they had good insight in terms of, again, the things they were good at and some of the things that were more challenging. Thinking about perseverance.

Their ability to kind of show perseverance in face of, kind of, hardships. They were able to kind of learn from that and kind of keep going when it was important. But at the same time, they also demonstrate flexibility. So they kind of knew when to, kind of, quit sometimes. Or when to kind of step away and not put more energy or effort into that. So again it was a real keen awareness there about how they're spending their time and their energy. Use of support systems. And this one I thought was really interesting because it's about building relationships with supporters. Again, it's about those networks of caring adults around them that are there to support them. So being able to actively seek support from others. And often those who have high and clear expectations from them. And I'm sure we can all think of, kind of, situations from perhaps our own lives or other colleagues that way, where there's that one student that really connects to someone who has high expectations of them because they really believe in them. And they're connecting with that person because they can see that that person sees that strength and, kind of, potential in them.

And lastly here thinking about emotional coping strategies. Recognising that there are stresses and frustrations associated with their learning difficulties, but that they're able to develop effective means of coping with some of that stress. And in spite of that, demonstrate that kind of positive, hopeful outlook on things. We know that's, kind of, so important. And what is really interesting, as we begin to kind of take this study and kind of map out some of the skills or the attributes that are important and begin to kind of add on other factors -- or sorry, studies here -- and I'm just going to go through a couple just to show you some of the others here -- all where they're talking about different attributes and characteristics that distinguish those who are doing better down the road. And what we begin to kind of see now is some of those skills and results coming together as, kind of, clusters. So they're beginning to kind of hang together. So they're not, kind of, a complete overlap, but they're very strongly related. And I just did this for, kind of, six of the studies there that I had mentioned. And some other people, kind of, more brilliant than I had been able to kind of put this together with the whole state of, kind of, literature out there and come up with what's called the Social and Emotional Competencies. So again, those skills and attributes that Goldberg and her colleagues identified have been mapped on by other studies and work showing that these social and emotional competencies and skills are so important for many of our students, but particularly those with learning disabilities. So what is social-emotional learning? Well, social-emotional learning is a process through which children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognise and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations in a



constructive manner. And again, I can't think of any of these skills here that could be developed without that support of a safe, knowledgeable adult there meeting them where they're at. What I would like you to do now is again, you've just had the opportunity a little bit ago here to think about that positive relationship with that child with a learning disability. What I would like you to do is go back to your, kind of, elbow partner there. And what I would like you to do is again, thinking back about that relationship, which of those social and emotional competencies -- and I'll show you the graphic again -- did that student display? And if you had to pick one particular area or competency to kind of work on for that student, what would it be of those ones that were highlighted there? So I'll show you the graphic here. So again, with your elbow partner here, I would like you to do that again. Go back to that relationship you were just talking about and see, how is the student doing in these areas? And what one would you select if you were going to, kind of, continue that work on those social and emotional skills. Okay, well why don't we bring back some of the discussion there? Is there a particular table or pair there that had a good example of a social-emotional competency that they would, kind of --? Either the strengths of the student displayed or what they would be working on in that relationship? Well, we'll have a chance here to go through this a little bit more in detail and see how that, kind of, might apply. So again, that self-awareness, social and emotional competency -- again, similar to some of Goldberg's work there was about recognising their own and, kind of, others' emotions. So being able to kind of assess their own strengths and limitations and possess, kind of, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

So thinking back to the relationship you had with that particular child, perhaps this was an area that was quite strong for the student. Or perhaps it was responsible decision-making. That for this student, they were able to identify problems when making decisions. Being able to generate solutions, being able to, kind of, reflect on some of the choices that had been made, and making decisions that are in line with their, kind of, own standards. So the question that often comes up when we're talking about social-emotional learning then, again in the context of that teacher-student relationship, is what one do we focus on? Perhaps the student that you were talking about had skills in all those areas. Or perhaps they were struggling in lots of them. How do we pick the right one to, kind of, focus on? How do we, kind of, know? And that's where that, kind of, next inch for social and emotional growth will really kind of be personalised, kind of, for each student. So in kind of a parallel way with, kind of, academics -- again, we're kind of digging deeper and working on that, kind of, next inch. The same is true for social and emotional skills. That working collaboratively with the student and your support team, that you be trying to generate plans and Next Steps there for, again, supporting growth in those particular areas. Also think about thinking strategically about the targeted goal area. And again, that's that, kind of, personalise and precision that we're using in the social and emotional realm now, instead of perhaps, kind of, more academics. We'd be thinking about, you know, perhaps Colin has a lot of challenges in self-management and we're not going to work on that right now. But, you know, relationship skills is a good social and emotional skill and demand for us to kind of work on right now. And perhaps believing that, you know, if we work on this area it will lead to, kind of, growth in other domains as well. So that next inch in their social and emotional learning will be kind of tailored and unique to, kind of, each student. Just as our IEPs are for all of our students that way, social-emotional learning is the exact same. Again,



using our, kind of, collective wisdom and the, kind of, knowledge about the student. In terms of supporting those skills, we want to kind of be developing a road map. All complex skills, whether they be, kind of, social-emotional or more academic focus, can be broken down into its component parts. When we think about all the complexity and skills required for self-regulation, we know that those can be broken down to be focusing on individual skills. So perhaps right now this student needs to be learning emotional vocabulary for how they're, kind of, feeling right now. We're not even at the part about, kind of, regulating some of those strong feelings. We're going to work on the very initial steps around recognising and labeling emotions. We want to consider, you know, What skills do we need to teach for this particular child? What skills do we need to grow? You know? We're seeing some of it, but we need to see it more consistently or across multiple settings. Right?

And to be kind of precise under what conditions does this skill exist and not exist? You know, he can really, kind of, work on this self-regulation in, kind of, the morning. But the afternoon is a lot more challenging. All right. What do we want that skill to look like? And again, perhaps it's, kind of, the whole day that we're now working on it. You know, as part of developing that road map again in collaboration with the student is, you know, Why is this work important for the child as well? You know? Perhaps it's because they kind of hate melting down and losing it in front of others. In front of his peers. We need to recognise growth and development in these skills and kind of plan for both, kind of, a short and kind of the long-term game. So again that road map is going to be comprehensive. It's going to be, kind of, precise and tailored to the student and where they're at in those different domains.

I would like to finish off with a couple things. But one is going back to that letter from Brittany that she wrote. Again, she was an adolescent that we had a lot of challenges connecting with because of that wall initially. And it, kind of -- was able to kind of reach out in a letter. So this was three years later and we got an email.

"I just wanted to quickly write and share how amazing things are right now. For some strange reason, school actually seems to be easier in some ways. And I'm getting along really well with some of the new friends I've met. A lot of them seem to have anxiety and depression too, and they're having problems coping with things. I've been a big help to some of the students on my floor. I guess I've learned how to deal with some of my stuff so I can give back now. Who knew that I of all people would be the one helping out?"

And for me -- and again, that was -- you know, when we received that we were kind of in tears because we knew at the time we had to be that holder of that strength and potential for Brittany. We had to, kind of, hold firm in the knowledge that she was going to get there. But we had to do that together. And again, you can see some of her comments in there too about the learning and strength that comes out from some of those vulnerabilities in that moment. So an amazing kind of email to receive there. Before I go to a short video here, I want to provide a little bit of a summary.



And that's what we learned from, again Hattie, that the student relationship is one of the most impactful tools you'll have in the classroom. For students with a learning disability, that strong relationship can be built. That strength-based provides that safety and understanding. And that might be an understanding that they can only get from, kind of, a handful of individuals. We know that social-emotional skills are important for later functioning and success for students with LD. And that social and emotional skills can grow in the security of that strong teacher-student relationship. Because vulnerability can be turned into strength. And again, before I go to the video here, I don't know if you, kind of, wear a cape to the classroom, kind of, each day -- and if you do that's okay; I haven't been to all your classes here. And it's okay if you don't consider yourself a teaching rock star in the class there. But know that in the words of, kind of, the researchers -- you're a statistically significant effect. And perhaps more simply in the words of a child -- the difference-maker, the hero, and someone who believes in them.

Thank you for your time and attention. Have a wonderful start back in September.

