



ONE MINUTE INSERVICE

Take a minute; learn a lot!



The *Two-By-Ten* Strategy for Dealing with Difficult Students

It probably would take little effort for you to identify your *most* difficult student. This child is active, disruptive, and frustrating. Researcher Raymond Wlodkowski investigated a strategy called *Two-by-Ten* and found very successful results. With the strategy, the teachers focus on their most difficult student. For two minutes each day, ten days in a row, teachers have a personal conversation with the student about anything the student is interested in (as long as the conversation is appropriate for school). Wlodkowski found an 85% improvement in that one student's behavior. In addition, he found that the behavior of all the other students in class improved.

Many teachers utilizing the *Two-by-Ten* strategy found similar results. Their worst student became an ally in the class when they formed a strong personal connection with that student. Though this seems counterintuitive, the students who seemingly deserve the most punitive consequences we can deliver are actually the ones who most need a positive and personal connection with the teacher. Often when they act out, they are letting us know that they are seeking a positive connection with an adult authority figure and that they need that connection first, before then can or will focus on academic content. One teacher using the *Two-by-Ten* strategy said, "Not only does it help with the toughest students, but also it helps the teachers remember their humanity as they attempt to survive and thrive in the classroom."

Source: "Assuming the Best", by R. Smith & M. Lambert, [Educational Leadership](#), Sept., 2008

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