

NOEL ATTENDANCE RESEARCH PROJECT IMPACT ON ADULTS PART 3
 RESEARCH QUESTION 3
 ACCORDING TO THE PARTICIPATING EDUCATORS, WHAT WERE THE IMPACTS OF
 THE ATSA: TWO BY TEN INTERVENTION ON THEMSELVES AND OTHER ADULTS?

On the survey, educators had an opportunity to provide comments on the impact of the pilot project on themselves and other adults. Comments on the implementation of the pilot project were organized into four categories; awareness, data use, renewed intention/focus, broadening knowledge. These categories along with sample quotes are provided in Table 6.

Table 6.
 Comments from educators regarding the impact of the ATSA: TWO by TEN intervention on their own practice.

| Theme | Quote from Educators |
|-------------------------|---|
| Awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project has made me so much more aware of the impact that my interactions can have on others throughout any given day. It has lead me to become more aware and more reflective. • I am so much more aware of the possible impact on a student's heart just by giving them a smile, addressing them as I pass them by name if I know it, or with a term of endearment when appropriate. I have learnt of the power and significance of addressing each student by name, and go out of my way to make sure that I address each of my students by name every day, and those I interact with outside my class. The other thing I have noticed that I do differently is that I greet those students that arrive late personally, let them know that I was looking out for them, and greet them with a smile, so that they do not feel insignificant. If they have been unexpectedly away, I will let them know they were missed, and I have noticed that the class joins in with me letting the student know they were missed. It has established a culture of family and connection. The students now will let us (and each other) know when they will be away and why. It's really cool. • I wasn't aware of the "names" of some of the attendance practices that our staff uses. It is good to be able to put a label on what we do and know they are becoming common practice in all schools. |
| Broadening knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did take away a new scope for looking at attendance. It confirmed the importance of building positive relationships with students. The restorative questions were also helpful and useful in the classroom. • There were some content areas that provided some new learning and some excellent resources/web pages/links that were shared that I would like to delve in deeper with staff that have the potential to change our practices. • I learned a lot from this project. One major takeaway is thinking of issues from the perspective of "what is the impact?" rather than from a judgmental perspective • I now feel more educated on the importance of building connections with students who miss a lot of school. Also, the factors that need to be considered, outcomes and ways to deal with difficult situations were helpful. |
| Renewed intention/focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found that it helped me to re-focus on relationship building. • I started using restorative circle talks again. • Reinforced the importance of building a relationship with students and their parents. • I took a more focused approach to developing the relationships. |

| | |
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| Data use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying attention to absent students on paper is key to spotting trends. The compass of shame (shared this with colleagues) assisted in understanding students better • It made me focus on the data behind attendance instead of relying on observational data - I was surprised by the data. It will help me be a better administrator |
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Results from educator interviews corroborated the survey results. In the interviews, educators suggested that the work on ATSA: TWO BY TEN provided a structured opportunity for educators to reflect on their teaching practice. For some educators, there was new learning and many educators indicated that this work reinforced prior learning. Educators set intentions to attend to absenteeism and to build connections through regular short interactions with students and parents/adults for next school year¹. One educator said,

It helped a lot because I do have one of the students I picked in my class and another student I picked because I had already known the parent and I noticed that there was an issue already. And so I had been keeping an eye on him already. And then this program came. So it was honestly a godsend for me. So it, helped, it did not in any way hinder anything that i was doing. If anything, it motivated me. It got me more organized, more direction, gave me more direction, and it, helped honed in my intentions and my time. So it made me more productive, more intentional. (quote from educator interview)

Some educators indicated that strategies presented were already being done in the classroom and thus had minimal impact on their professional practice.

The positive impact of the NOEL project was that we spent a lot of time reflecting on current practices in our school surrounding student attendance and I don't think any self-reflection is ever a bad thing. It is always good to be reminded of best practices and to make sure you are being accountable. Unfortunately, I don't think my student attendance improved from completing this project. As I mentioned above, many of the strategies discussed in the learning modules were things I was doing in some way shape or form, already in my classroom. I still don't feel that we have the answer for getting some of our families to school on a regular basis. I was hoping to have some new ideas brought forward through this project, ideas that came from outside the box, that we have never tried before as a staff, but I didn't really feel like that is what we got. (quote from educator interview)

Most educators (51%) reported that they knew more about their colleagues as a result of the project. When asked about what advice they would give a colleague, educators said:

- Use student names
- Ask questions and listen to the answers. E.g., about their sport, baby brother, art, skating, part time job, etc.
- Be intentional with relationships
- Stay positive
- Keep reaching out to families
- Look at the data
- Keep making your classroom a welcoming safe place.
- Your words and interactions matter.

¹ See Appendix D for other educator quotes on the impact of the TWO by TEN project on adults.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF IN NOEL ATTENDANCE RESEARCH PROJECT, SPRING 2023

1. Opening -

1. thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this Attendance Research Project and for completing the survey which I have here. I want to get deeper into your responses for context, stories, that sort of thing. I really appreciate the time you took to get involved in this and thank you for your time on this call. I will be recording this interview for the Research Project work with Dr. Christina van Barneveld from Lakehead University. Recording it also helps me to just focus on your answers rather than trying to write everything down.
2. I also want you to know about my involvement with the NOEL Attendance Research Project. I put it together and so the filter that I'm using is that while it's mine, it's ours. I want to know how it went to change the pattern of attendance for students and I want to find out the impact of this project. I am interested in making this a safe space to speak the truth. Is it OK with you to continue or do you have any questions before I begin?

2. Implementation of the Project - How did it go?

1. Tell me about what was going at school on during this project. What was the context that enable or inhibited the work you were doing on student attendance.

3. Impact of the Project

1. What impact did this Project have on your students? On your adults? On you?

4. Stories

1. What story or anecdote can you share about your work with students and adults on this Research Project?

5. Anything else

1. What else do I need to know that I haven't asked you about?

6. Closing - thank you again very much for your time, for your comments and for your participation in this Research Project

(I would like to circulate the questions to the participating staff in advance of the recorded interview.)

1.

APPENDIX C

EDUCATOR QUOTES REGARDING THE IMPACT OF ATSA: TWO BY TEN ON STUDENTS

“My student misses a, like he misses less this year than he did last year. Last year when we were at the other school, he was bullied and that's why we ended up moving here last year. But then we moved back. Because the bullies were not there any longer and he was having a good year, but then they actually got a house in this community, so they moved back again same time of year. So this year his attendance has been a lot better.

“I, feel like I was, able to, talk to the, couple of students that, that I chose. I don't know that it made a difference with them though, was it was success when they spoke to me. When they asked me things like, honestly, like that, was success for, these two students. And like I said, I just feel like, yeah, it was I made a. So much progress from there.

“The one student in (grade7) that, and they all know who I'm talking about or well known because that person in his or her elementary school had no connection, behavior, problem of lot of attendance, moved around from school to school and, he said that he has, he had no connection. To anyone at this school and just walked out and you see that person walking around the hall today and, they're, the amount of growth that person has, shown is, tremendous. Kudos to everybody.

“I think it made everyone a bit more aware of how they were conducting themselves. So I think the fact that they were able to build these relationships, speak to these students, have intention behind that, it forced them to make these connections without it seeming too taxing. You know what I mean? And that's like the two by 10 model, right? Yep, you're making it short, you're making it concise. You're making it meaningful, and it's being a, genuine conversation in exchange. So I think with everything, especially coming back from the pandemic, that was really important cuz some kids didn't have that social interaction and now suddenly, oh look, someone cares about me.

“there was a couple of kids that I know (another staff member) had mentioned that she was gonna try to focus her attention on and I was sure that those kids had no idea who I was. And then one day I was walking by and they said, how. This call and I went, hi guys, how are you? And I was like, so then we just chatted really quick as I was walking by. And I was like, I didn't know They know my name. Wow. And now every time I see the younger one, She's actually in the grade. Across the hall from me. And she's like, guess what? And I'm like, what? And she's like, I sat in your chair and I was like, ah, so now it's like more of like that kind of playful. Like she actually can talk to me when I was like, I was sure this kid had no idea who I am. It's like, I don't know where she knew my name from, but she learned it and now she's like friendly with, I was funny. I didn't know, she knew me. That's a great story. It's a great story. I'm trying to make sure that I like, you know, say their names back and it's been, it's been really fun to, to have those kinds of moments.”

“my in-class student, let me tell you when I started paying that more directed attention call saying his name, making sure that I connected him at least once a day on a personal level making sure that I was listening to him more. Oh my goodness. And I wrote this on the survey. It was like a fountain just went and he would tell me things I. As time progressed, tell me, he would come and seek me out. Tell me about his day. Tell me about what he did the night before. Tell me what he did with his family. He started sharing more about what his home life was like. And so I was able to figure out why he was coming in late so often, right? What is going on at home? What is what, is hindering him from getting here on time? And it, just all everything lined up. Everything made sense. And then, Because of that, we were able to talk about solutions. What can we do to get you back to school on time? What can we do to help you be able to get up on time, get your brother up on time? Because that's the skill that he had to develop as well. And still working on how to motivate your little brother to listen to you because you know he's the little brother and. The older brothers never listened to by the little brother. And those kinds of things. What can we do the night before to help you prepare because you know of the family dynamics. So it really helped me a lot and it helped the student be aware that, yeah, he's late. Yeah, he doesn't like it. Why can't he do more? Because it really falls on him, even though he's only in grade five, it really, the responsibility does fall on him. And so that was really good

“the other student, I found also he's a lot more reserved. However, again, that intentional coming, seeing him in the hallway because I supervise his class during snack time, I'm able to have that extra connection. Again, he would come and tell me it was my big brother's birthday. He turned 20, blah, blah, blah, blah. This is what we did. This is what we did, and this is how we did out of nowhere.

I saw you when I was biking. That kind of thing. And that helped me understand, okay, so without pestering his mom so how's it going? Did you guys go away? What's happening? Oh, I noticed you weren't here this morning. Did anything happen? And he would be able to tell me without. Feeling like I was being nosy because I, he knows that I care. And and it helped because I realized he was, he likes being in school. He does not wanna not be in school. And so I have noticed that when his mom is gonna be away, when they're gonna go away, And the little sister goes, he can stay as long as there's a brother looking after him or some other relative. So I've noticed that more, but I, can't tell you if it's correlation because of my relationship with him. I just noticed that he's been not, he's been coming when his sister hasn't been here sometimes.”

“So what's going on in the class because of that one student. I make sure that when he comes in, how are you? I give a big smile when he comes into the door so he doesn't feel uncomfortable. I give a big, huge smile. I come make sure that I see him later. Hey how's it going? What happened today? And then I've started to also say, Hey, by the way, who's not gonna be here Thursday? Who's not gonna be here Friday? Who's not? Now, the children are doing that on their own. They're telling us when they're not gonna be here, why they're not gonna be here. They're telling each other that. And when a student is unexpectedly not there, like they haven't warned us ahead of time, we'll have somebody else saying, oh yes, they're going, they're gonna be, they're sick, or they're not well, or something happened. It's fantastic. It's almost like that's awesome. We, it really has changed the dynamic of absences in our class just alone in that class. They tell us way ahead of time when they're gonna be gone, what's happening, and if someone's sick and they know it, they let us know.”

APPENDIX D

EDUCATOR QUOTES ON THE IMPACT OF ATSA:TWO BY TEN ON ADULTS

“I found that it made me reflect and it also made me remember things that I once knew and once practiced that over time you let go of certain practices when you're in the education field as we are and new things are coming up month to month and you forget the things that you learned five years ago.”

“...those sunshine calls, how critical they are on showing parents that we care about their child, and it's not, just negative phone calls, but it's the positive things that we tell them is they need to hear that as well. So one of the things I'm implementing as a result of this project is next year I'm tasking all the teachers in our school to do three sunshine calls

“when I talk to parents, I ensure them that. From my end, I'll do everything possible to ensure that their child will be successful. They have to live up to their end. Send your child to school. Make sure your child gets a good meal. Make sure your child is sleeping eight hours a night. Make sure you get them ready in the morning with their bag and their clothing so that they can come to school ready and able to learn.

“Like it had a big impact because it just reconfirmed that you do that. I do need to spend time, like invest time to get to know every student and build that connection and be intentional like we talked about in the meeting slots about being intentional with that. And it's something that I always knew, but I guess I just took it for granted this year, and this year was weird, like coming in November because typically most school years you spend like the start of September establishing those connections in October. But the impact was just like for sure the importance of connection and then just some of the strategies that we talked about and being more intentional about it.

“However I did make a conscious effort to start trying to communicate more with families that I wasn't necessarily working with. If I saw a parent in the hall or out in the school yard dropping a student off, I would make a conscious effort to stop and have a brief conversation with them.”

“I think the biggest impact it probably had on was me as I mentioned, get me thinking about how we approach. Attendance piece next year. I wanna take a more active role as, the VP to keep track of not only two marker students, but more data in that sense. I've turned a lot of that over to our attendance counselor. But working closer with guidance and, finding out those reasons, finding out if there's gaps that. Or areas that we need to provide something or step back or whatever it may be. So I think this project has just got my wheels turning for, next year.”

“I think just being aware of the attendance issues. At the school, and this being our, my peers, first year here, when we start the year, next year, we'll already have a good idea of who, whose attendance was lacking, like who struggled with attendance. So we'll be able to jump on that way earlier next year.

“I think I'll just more aware of that circle of shame. And I and I. I listened for it with my colleagues as well. You know. I was listening to one of my one of The classrooms right next door to me, and the teacher was saying to a child, You need to come to school every day. You can't miss any more school, and I was thinking, it's so true she doesn't need to come to school every day, but we need to be careful that we're not shaming them that way. I'm definitely more aware of that now.

“well, it did give me a lot to think about because, It kind of reinforced the importance, like I do really try hard to build relationships early on, but this really reinforced the importance of building those relationships, not only with kids but with other staff in the building. And I think looking at the role that everyone plays in this and the problem, you know, that some things are problems or situations that are out of our control, but there are things that we can do here in the last module, I really thought a lot about how it starts early, right? The patterns that we develop in like kindergarten, grade one and grade two, they start early because those are going to carry on.

“I would say that once I chose my focus students, I did really focus on trying to, you know, like build those relationships with them and have those conversations just like related to their interests, their extracurricular activities things that were going on at home. Not that I don't do that with all of my kids, but yeah, there were some things, you know, that were pointed out that I think as a teacher, I always knew were important, but it was kind of reinforced, you know, when you hear it in a different way of like greeting your kids in the morning at the door. Like the importance of that and those conversations. And I do think it kind of sets the precedent for the whole day, right? Some of those kids that Maybe struggle a bit to come to school or struggle with the morning. If you can kind of greet them and engage them in conversation and turn their day around before they get inside.”

“there are deeper reasons and other reasons and to just be aware and look out for them. Maybe like through practice as time goes by, maybe I'll notice it faster, but Right for now, because of the modules, I felt like I was looking for those and being like, oh, this is goes in that compass of shame thing. The response that I just got from this kid. He's telling me that's something deeper and maybe eventually that'll come naturally to me. Cause come, what comes naturally to me now is oh, shush, now you're fine. You can do it. Come on. And that's all I would do with my kids. But then I'm dis not disregarding them, but I'm oh, come on. But now I'm actually seeing that there is something more. And I think we, that I see that faster and quicker and but it is neat to be able to look at it from a different way.

“I think it was just being aware of my relationships with the students and being more open to say This student doesn't necessarily deal well with sarcasm, so then I realize I should not use sarcasm with that student. And like it makes you more aware of like how to deal with the students essentially. And making sure that relationship is there is helpful for the students and I think they become more comfortable and then they want to come to school more often. I'm not sure about other people, but for myself and the students, I think it's been pretty good.

“I think probably the biggest impact was just taking kids and you see some of the Behaviors or, maybe even the body language they come into school with. And just giving yourself permission to stop doing what you might think is more important. To spend time and talk and say, are you okay? Is there something, yeah. Be being, daring, being curious enough being that kind of thing. Giving yourself permission to j p into spots that you might not.

“I think it helped me and how I frame my conversations around attendance and that I'm not going to talk about attendance. So like making sure that I'm not focusing so much on like, well, you haven't been here, but like how can we help you get your bag? Or like, so good to see you miss you and like trying to keep it more on the positive and different ways of supporting them. I'm trying to get to know them. , And their interests so that we can maybe. You know, call them out a little closer instead of like having them just not want to show up at all. , so I think a big part of the, like the positives that I've seen from this is just how I approach conversations with the students.

“but it's also working with staff members and there's one of the other staff members who was a part of the project. I feel like I've been able to build a relationship with her kind of ready for level after having these conversations and, you know, doing check-ins on in the hallway and talking about what some of the things that popped up during our attendance modules or our calls and I've been able to build a really positive relationship with her and I've seen her attendance improves which is really cool I'm kind of just set like a residual effect, I guess.

Interviewer: You mean her attendance as a teacher at school? Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Being really brought in like us having really meaningful conversations in the hallway or in a staff room or I'm passing. There was a conversation that her and I had as we were going through the school resources. So it was totally unrelated to anything like. You know, attendance wise or, but we started kind of to chat about some of the things that had popped up. I had plans to do a check in with her by the end of the week and so, I mean, it just felt really good to take that time to do it. And we both kind of like acknowledged that we like cared about each other in that moment. We cared about following up with. But yes, I have seen, I mean improvement in her attendance and her overall... participation in school culture, activities, and yeah, it's been a really great thing to see in her.

“I think like the biggest thing was it validated a lot of what we were doing and reinforced that the path that we were on was the, the right one lots of the articles that we had read and the learning was connected to the culture that we've kind of established here at the school that's very much relationship driven and restorative based. So I think it just reinforced for us that what we were doing was. It was right. And I think that, , it was a reminder sometimes too of some of those things that we had talked about, but just bringing them back to the forefront”

“very early on in our, in our learning, we had talked about the checklist for absenteeism and the protective and risk factors. And so we had brought that to our staff meeting and we had shared that as part of a resource that we would wanna incorporate into our attendance folders. To help us for those targeted students identify what, what are the, the risk factors and the protective factors that those kids are struggling with and then that allowed us to better understand those particular students and their needs and how we could support them. And so I, that would be one of the stories for sure that I feel that was one of the specifics. I think what I liked that one point, one of the quotes that resonated with me, that I had talked to our staff about was bearing witness to their story and their truth and that whole compassion or compass of shame And so we had talked about some of our existing practices in our community lounge and how we were still trying to figure out how to do that as a school community outside of like personal, like one-on-one, listening, but as a larger community, how we could create a space to allow that to happen.

APPENDIX E

CHECKLIST OF ABSENTEEISM PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND RISK FACTORS

Some of the **protective factors** for students that can mitigate and address absenteeism:(Adapted from CHECK & CONNECT Protective Factors associated with school dropout, Regents of University of Minnesota, 2017)

- student completes homework
- student comes to class prepared
- student has high locus of control
- student has good self-concept
- student has expectations for school completion
- family- academic support for learning(e.g. help with homework)
- family - motivational support for learning(e.g. high expectations for learning)
- family - availability of educational resources
- family - parental monitoring
- school - orderly school environment
- school - committed, caring teachers
- school - fair discipline policies
- school - relationship with one caring adult
- school - opportunities for participation
- Other (Please specify)

Some of the **risk factors** or reasons impacting student attendance were: (check all that apply)
(adapted from Dr. Chris O'Connor, Dr. Tyler Frederick Ontario Tech University Literature Review 2017)

- student school phobia/anxiety
- student learning disabilities
- student had poor school attachments
- student behaviour problems/disorders
- student stress
- student trauma
- student lack of motivation
- student part-time work
- student health problems
- family child abuse/neglect
- family income is low
- family status is single parent
- family parent disability
- family lack of parental educational involvement
- family parental substance abuse
- family lack of parenting skills
- school - conflicts with teachers
- school- deficient attendance policies
- school-bullying
- school- not accommodating different learning styles
- school - disadvantaged schools
- school- unchallenging assignments
- community - disadvantage linked to family income
- community - disadvantage linked to type of neighbourhood
- community - disadvantage linked to local schools
- community - disadvantage linked to investment in youth
- Other (Please specify)