

Making the Connection

Building and measuring relational skills with a
technology-powered system

Relationships are the foundation of a good life but technology is eroding them

ALWAYS TRUE

Relationships predict long-term happiness and health.

In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General declared loneliness a **public health epidemic**.

NEWLY URGENT

43%

but
only

28%

say AI has **freed up time** for human connection

use that time to connect

33% of employees rarely or never have conversations with colleagues beyond transactional tasks.

21% of early career workers report feeling lonelier at work since AI arrived

THE GAP

Universities treat relational skills as someone else's responsibility

Traditionally, relational skills have been **transmitted by chance** via classroom interaction, clubs, campus culture, in-person mentorship.

Online learners, first-generation students, and working adults often **lack access to those informal channels**.

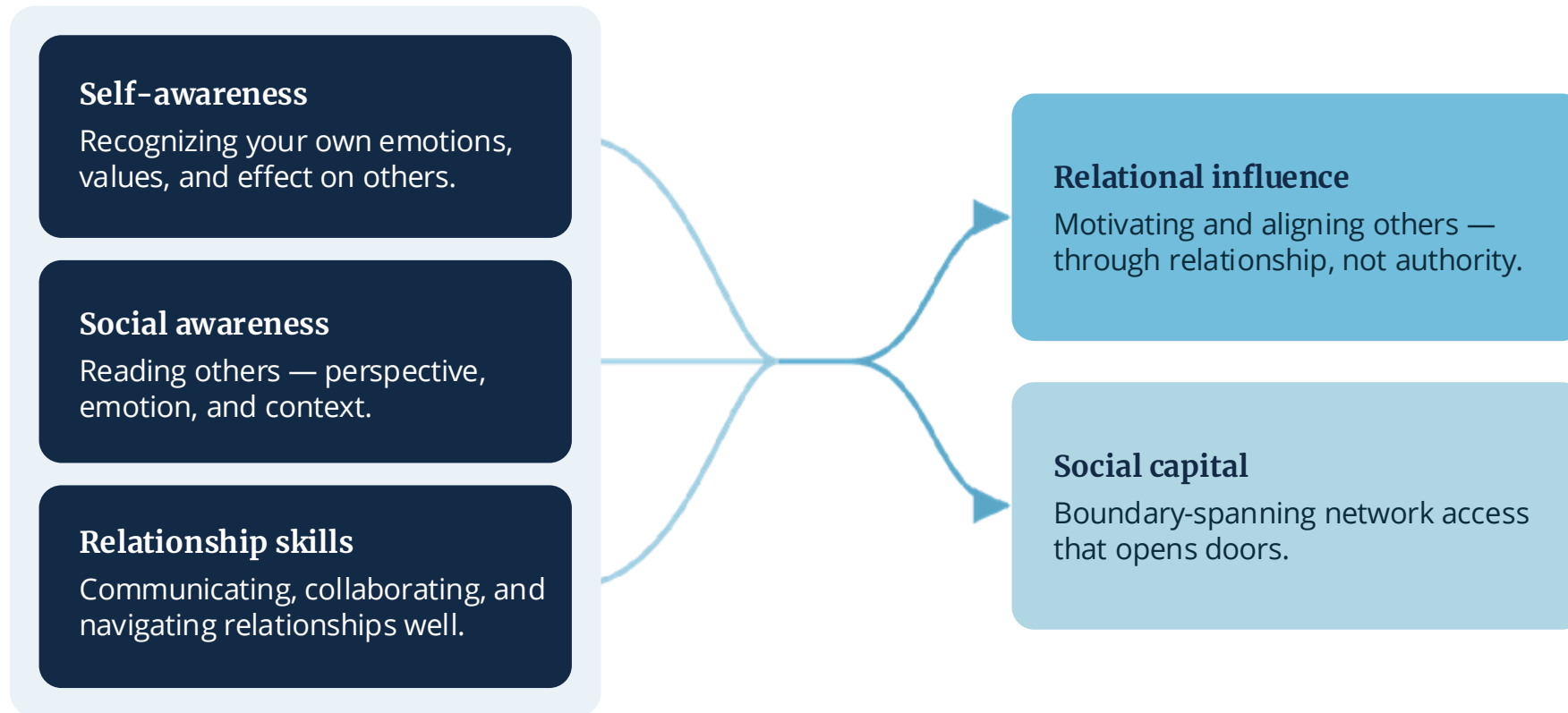
THE CONNECTION GAP

1 in 5 WGU students know **zero** people in their desired field

WGU helps me connect with others **31%**

Feel connected to other students **28%**

Foundational competencies create value in the workforce



Adapted from CASEL Framework for
Social and Emotional Learning

Building relational skill deliberately takes three things

1

Define

Specify the skills precisely enough to teach and assess them.



2

Integrate

Build practice into the learning experience not a separate, skippable module.



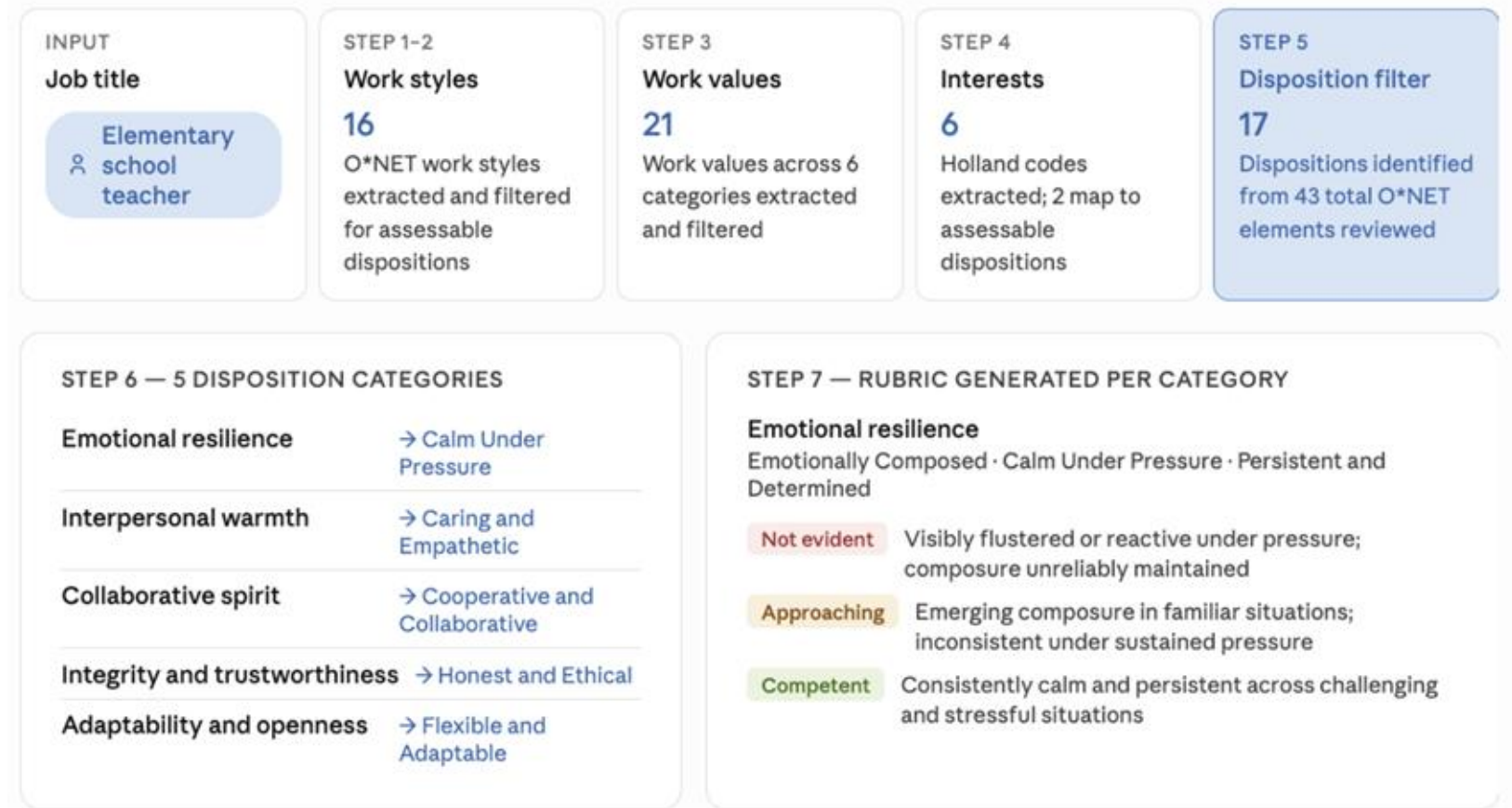
3

Measure

Evaluate demonstrations of skills.

You can't build or measure what you haven't defined

AI generates behaviorally grounded, industry-aligned frameworks for dispositional skills.



Built in, not added on

Relational skills generated by Lazuli and woven into domain coursework as graded activities

Healthcare Communications

Real action — reaching out to an actual contact.

Task 2: Identify Your Feedback Loop Unlimited attempts - / 100 points

Great writing is collaborative. Identify **one person** in your current professional or academic network who could help you verify if your tone is right for patients' families. Who are they (by role), and **why** would their perspective be valuable for this specific message? Then reach out and ask for feedback. This is a simple way to start building your **social network** through your work.

Type your response here...

Grade

Test

Project Planning

Rehearsal —
drafting the
outreach email.

The Power of a Second Set of Eyes

Even the most experienced writers miss their own errors because the brain often 'fills in' what it expects to see. This is where your professional network becomes an asset.

🔗 **Building Your Network:** Identify a 'study buddy' or a mentor whose attention to detail you admire. Offering to swap drafts for a 5-minute 'mechanical check' is an excellent way to build mutual trust and professional collaboration within your field.

Task: Reaching Out for Feedback Unlimited attempts - / 100 points

Scenario: You've finished your first draft of the community green space proposal. You want to ask a senior urban planner to give it a "trust signal check" for any mechanical errors before it goes to the commission.

Task: Write a 3-4 sentence professional email to your senior colleague. Be specific about what you need (e.g., a "mechanical check" for precision) and how their expert perspective will help ensure the proposal's success.

Type your response here...

Grade

Test

MEASURE · SIMULATION

Simulation makes relational skills easy to practice and see

1 The scenario

NH **Nadia Haddad**
Parent

WHO THE TEACHER FACES

- ☐ Skeptical of school testing
- ☐ Fiercely protective of her son
- ☐ Softens only with real evidence

TEACHER'S GOAL

Help her see her son's challenges are real, and open a path forward.

2 Practice

Before we start, I want to know whether this is about helping my child or building a case against him.

I'm definitely here to help. I enjoy having your son in my class, and I want to make sure we have the right support in place for him. Would it be okay if I showed you some of his work?

That would help. He reads advanced Arabic and English texts with me at home and handles them well. What are you seeing that suggests he's struggling?

It's wonderful that he's reading so much with you at home. In class he's lively and engaged in discussion. Where it gets hard for him is working on his own, especially reading, where he tends to catch a word or two but miss the whole context.

3 Feedback

The teacher addressed the parent's skepticism with empathy, clear evidence, and active listening, bridging home and school without invalidating her experience, and reached a collaborative plan involving the reading specialist.

Empathy and tone

5/5

Put the parent at ease when she raised the "building a case" concern, and stayed validating of her efforts at home.

Clarity and knowledge

5/5

Explained the difference between decoding and comprehension, so she understood why he struggles despite sounding fluent.

Active listening

5/5

Used her description of the home reading routine to ask clarifying questions, leading to a breakthrough.

Problem-solving

5/5

Guided her toward a joint meeting with the reading specialist and offered to fold in the home bilingual books.

Video analysis captures what text can't



AI recognizes activity in video, builds a rubric from professional standards, and annotates against it.

Rubric 1
Compassionate care

13.0/13
100.0%

The participant demonstrated a "Competent" level of compassionate care, effectively balancing the technical requirements of the procedure with a genuine focus on the patient's wellbeing. The individual consistently treated the mannequin as a real patient, establishing a rapport immediately upon entering the bedside area. Rather than appearing detached or solely task-focused, the participant displayed a service-oriented demeanor by introducing herself and verifying the patient's identity before proceeding.

Evidence

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 08:42 | The participant introduces herself to the patient, establishing a professional connection. |
| 09:06 | The participant explains the procedure to the patient, ensuring they understand what the doctor ordered. |
| 09:30 | The participant demonstrates sensitivity by explaining she is going to feel the abdomen before touching the patient. |
| 09:59 | The participant explicitly asks for consent to examine the patient, demonstrating respect for the patient's autonomy. |

Validating AI-based assessment against human rating: A work in progress



A DISCIPLINED SET OF CHECKS

01

Establish the human-human agreement ceiling first

02

Look at the full score distribution, not just averages

03

Check behavior at the pass-fail threshold

04

Test for differential scoring across student subgroups

IN CLOSING

From accidental to deliberate

We have the tools. They are showing promise. It's worth our investment to get it right.

