

Reflection and planning exercise for building the teacher-student relationship

When working through the exercise with teachers, mentors, take time to:

Reflect and Document.

Reflect together on your understanding of the student, and the teacher-student relationship. Document examples that support or conflict with your reflections. (Pages 2-4)

Set Goals.

What do you want to achieve? Add these goals to the Document and Assess table. (Page 5)

Identify strategies and resources.

What strategies and resources can help create positive change for the teacher, student and the teacher-student relationship? (Page 5)

Observe.

Observe the student over the timeline chosen in the SMART goals, and document observations relevant to these goals below. (Page 5)

Assess.

At the end of the SMART goal timeline, use documented observations and other relevant data to assess how well the strategies and resources supported attainment of goals. Identify which strategies you will continue, and identify new strategies or external supports if needed, in consultation with the student and parent or carer. Strategies could include building teacher capacity in understanding and utilising student voice. (Page 5)

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Reflect and Document.

Discuss together your understanding of the student, their strengths, and where relevant, their culture, family background, characteristics of a specific disability and its functional impact on student learning, or other relevant information. Document observations and examples that support or conflict with your reflections.

Can you identify gaps in your understanding of the student?

What indicators do you tend to look for as a 'measure' of rapport and connection with a student? Reflecting on this specific student, are there other indicators of rapport and connection that may better reflect the student's personality and characteristics?

How confident are you that current adjustments and differentiation of the curriculum and classroom environments are effective and supporting positive outcomes, engagement and the teacher-student relationship?

Based on these reflections, what goals do you want to achieve to create positive change for the teacher, student and the teacher-student relationship? Document these in the Document and Assess table (Page 5).

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If there is disconnect within the teacher-student relationship, complete the following section.

Reflect and Document.

Discuss together your understanding of disconnect in the relationship. Specifically, when does it occur, how often does it occur, why might it occur? (For example, what happens beforehand? What triggers can you identify? Upon reviewing the disconnect occurrence and details, can a pattern be identified, such as time of the day/session, or a specific learning area?).

What strategies or approaches have helped you respectfully and positively manage disconnect with this student? Do any of your colleagues use strategies that work in their class, with this student or others?

What strategies or approaches have not been helpful for respectful and positive management of disconnect with this student?

Are there barriers to communication, or other social and emotional skills, that may be contributing to disconnect? (for example, how does the student communicate their needs or feelings?)

Based on these reflections, what goals do you want to achieve to create positive change for the teacher, student and the teacher-student relationship? Document these in the Document and Assess table (Page 5).

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Optional Reflection

Difficulties in interpersonal relationships are more likely to occur when we are experiencing stress, or disruptions to our wellbeing. When there have been challenges in the teacher-student relationship, it may at times feel difficult to sustain a positive mindset, and high expectations. Recognising the ways in which stress, wellbeing, a positive mindset, and high expectations can interact with the teacher-student relationship can help open up conversations about the types of strategies, resources or intervention that may support you as a teacher and individual.

The following reflections are optional – consider which you are comfortable sharing with the learning and support team or leader, and which questions you prefer to reflect on privately.

Reflect on your current wellbeing and experience of stress, and the activities you are currently engaging in to manage stress and increase wellbeing. Are there practical and feasible supports, resources or other changes that could be implemented to better support your wellbeing and stress management?

Reflecting on your experience of the teacher-student relationship, what has so far helped you build and maintain high expectations, recognition of strengths, and a positive attitude towards the student? Are there other strategies or supports (including approaches you may have used with other students) that could further strengthen this?

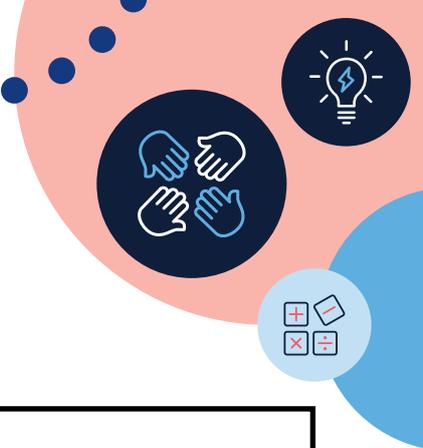
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Set Goals, Identify Strategies

Document goals, strategies, resources, observations and assessments here to monitor how effective the goals and planned strategies are in building the teacher-student relationship.

Identify strategies and resources	Observe	Assess
Goal:		
Goal:		

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Identify strategies and resources	Observe	Assess
Goal:		
Goal:		

Note: A Microsoft Word version is also available in the NSW Department of Education Inclusive Practices Hub.