GROWING TOGETHER

A Practical Guide for New Mentor Teachers

Supporting growth through reflection, dialogue, observation, and feedback.



Mentoring is not about having all the answers. It is about building trust, listening deeply, asking thoughtful questions, and supporting others to grow.

Matachita

My Mentoring Journey

Learning, reflecting and growing together.



This book is the result of my journey through the University of Canterbury mentoring programme and my aspiration to become a mentor teacher.

When I began this journey, I was motivated by a desire to support other teachers in the same way that experienced mentors had supported me throughout my own career. While I recognised the importance of mentoring, I quickly realised that effective mentoring requires a unique set of skills that extend beyond teaching. It involves listening deeply, asking thoughtful questions, building trusting relationships, providing meaningful feedback, and creating opportunities for reflection and growth.

Throughout this programme, I explored research, mentoring frameworks, and practical strategies for supporting both pre-service and in-service teachers. As my understanding developed, I found myself translating many of these ideas into visual tools, diagrams, observation templates, and practical examples that could be used in real classrooms and mentoring conversations.

During this process, I also used artificial intelligence tools to help me explore, challenge, clarify, represent, and organise my thinking. Rather than viewing these tools as sources of answers, I used them as thinking partners that supported reflection, generated alternative perspectives, and helped transform ideas into practical resources.

The resulting content reflects a combination of academic learning, classroom experience, personal reflection, professional dialogue, and the thoughtful use of technology.

A Continuing Journey



I see this book as an unfinished project. As I continue my own journey of learning, mentoring, and teaching, I hope to continue adding new pages, ideas, and insights. In many ways, this book will grow alongside me.

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CHAPTER 1

FOUNDATIONS OF MENTORING

Understanding the mindset of great mentors



COACHING vs MENTORING

Different purpose. Different focus. Same goal: growth.

COACHING
IMPROVES PERFORMANCE



KEY FEATURES

- Short-term
- Goal-focused
- Skill or strategy specific
- Provides feedback and direction
- Often during or right after a lesson (in the moment)
- Focus on performance improvement

EXAMPLE IN ACTION

After a lesson, the coach says:



MENTORING
SUPPORTS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



KEY FEATURES

- Long-term
- Holistic development
- Focus on the whole person
- Builds trust and relationship
- Reflects, listens, guides, encourages
- Supports growth, confidence and professional identity

EXAMPLE IN ACTION

Over time, the mentor helps the teacher to:

- Set goals
- Reflect on experiences
- Build confidence
- Navigate challenges
- Develop their own teaching philosophy



THE BIG DIFFERENCE

COACHING is like... shining a light on what to improve right now.

Both are powerful. Together, they transform teachers and students!

MENTORING is like... nurturing growth over time.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

COACHING: USE WHEN YOU WANT TO...

- Improve a specific skill or strategy
- Provide quick, targeted feedback
- Support short-term goals
- Focus on performance

MENTORING: USE WHEN YOU WANT TO...

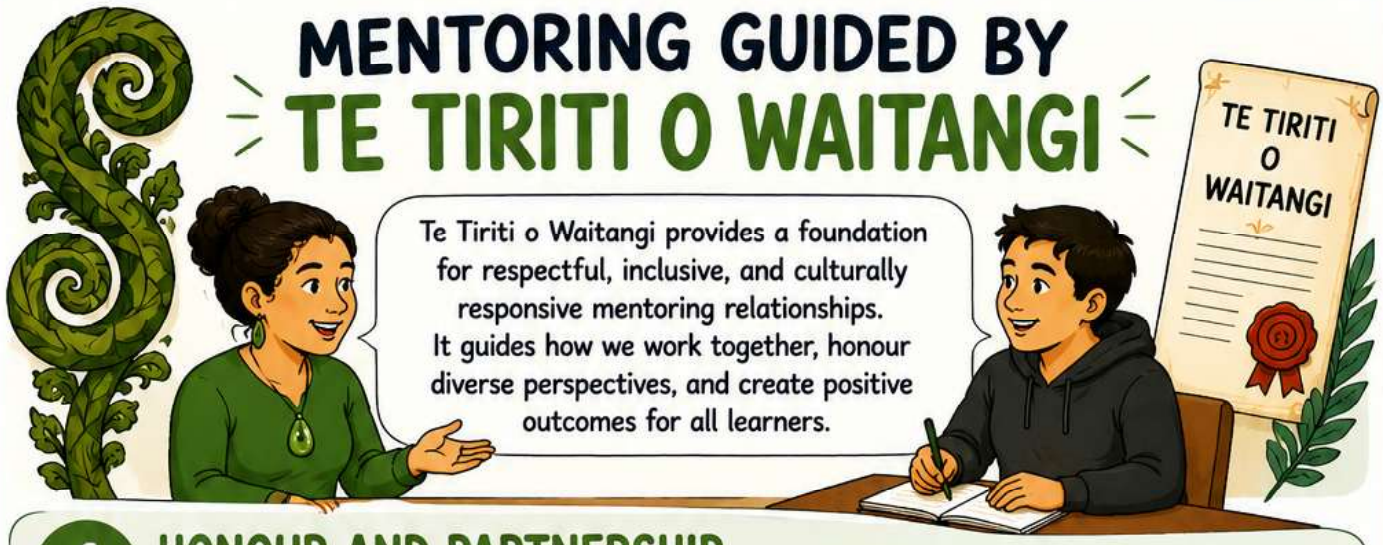
- Support long-term growth
- Build confidence and professional identity
- Explore beliefs, values, and experiences
- Build a trusting relationship

REMEMBER

"He kai kei aku ringa, he a ha kei aku whakaaro."
"What is in my hands, comes from my thoughts." – Māori Proverb

Great mentors and coaches create great teachers and brighter futures.

MENTORING GUIDED BY TE TIRITI O WAITANGI



Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides a foundation for respectful, inclusive, and culturally responsive mentoring relationships. It guides how we work together, honour diverse perspectives, and create positive outcomes for all learners.

1 HONOUR AND PARTNERSHIP

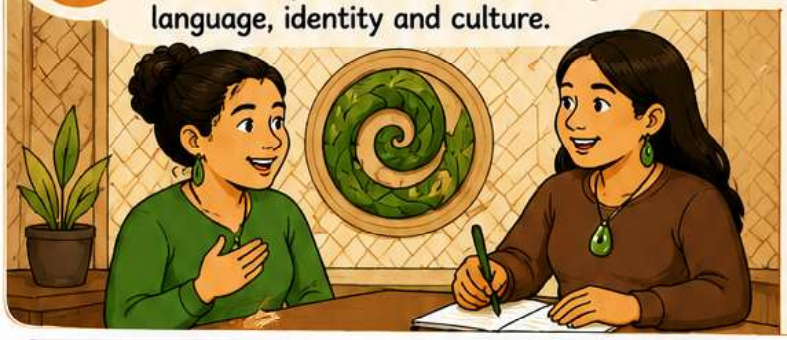
Work together as equal partners.



- Listen to and value different perspectives.
- Share decision-making and responsibilities.
- Co-construct goals and actions that reflect what matters to both mentor and mentee.

2 PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT

Value and protect Māori knowledge, language, identity and culture.



- Recognise and value Māori knowledge, language and ways of knowing.
- Create culturally safe spaces where identity and belonging are strengthened.
- Empower Māori learners to thrive as Māori and to see their culture as a strength.

3 FAIRNESS AND RESPECT

Ensure mentoring is inclusive, equitable and respectful.



- Respect different viewpoints, experiences and aspirations.
- Promote fairness, equity and inclusion for all.
- Treat everyone with dignity and support every learner to reach their potential.



Effective mentoring is built on trust, respect, shared responsibility, and a commitment to supporting the success of every learner.

MENTOR + MENTEE = GROWTH TOGETHER

A strong mentor–mentee relationship empowers today and builds tomorrow.



WHY THIS RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

1 GUIDANCE & DIRECTION



Mentors share experience and insight, helping mentees avoid pitfalls and make better decisions.

2 GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



Mentors challenge and encourage mentees to build skills, confidence, and new perspectives.

3 SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT



A trusted mentor provides emotional support and celebrates progress every step of the way.

4 LONG-TERM IMPACT



The relationship creates lasting impact—opening doors, building networks, and shaping future leaders.

WHAT EACH BRINGS TO THE RELATIONSHIP



THE MENTOR BRINGS:

- Experience & wisdom
- Guidance & perspective
- Support & belief in potential
- Connections & opportunities



THE MENTEE BRINGS:

- Curiosity & willingness to learn
- Motivation & effort
- Fresh ideas & questions
- Openness to feedback and growth



REFLECTION FRAMEWORK: STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIP

1. BUILT ON TRUST

- Do we communicate openly and honestly?
- Do I feel safe to ask questions and share challenges?
- Do we respect each other's ideas?

2. FOCUSED ON GROWTH

- Do we set clear goals together?
- Am I being challenged to grow?
- Do we celebrate progress?

3. SUPPORTED & ENCOURAGED

- Do I feel supported when things are difficult?
- Does my mentor encourage and acknowledge my efforts?

4. CONNECTED & MEANINGFUL

- Do we build a strong personal connection?
- Do we learn from each other?
- Do I feel understood?

5. LOOKING AHEAD TOGETHER

- Do we talk about my future goals?
- Is the relationship preparing me for what's next?

Take time to reflect regularly. Strong relationships don't happen by chance — they grow with intention.

THE HEART OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING

Great mentoring is built on relationships, reflection, and shared growth.

KEY INGREDIENTS OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING



1. Building relationships

Develop trusting and meaningful connections that create a safe foundation for mentoring.



2. Care and mana-enhancing practice

Show respect, kindness, and support that strengthens confidence and wellbeing.



3. Understanding people and place

Recognise the experiences, culture, context, and realities of the person you are working with.



4. Effective communication and dialogue

Use open conversations, active listening, questioning, and reflective discussion.



5. Learning with and from each other

Mentor and mentee both bring knowledge and learn together.



6. Equity and balanced relationships

Build relationships where both people have a voice, feel respected, and can learn from each other.

MENTORING IS NOT ✗



1. Controlling or dominating

Mentoring is not about power or control.



2. Creating a "mini me"

It is not about making someone become a copy of you.



3. Imposing ideas

It is not about telling someone what to think or do.

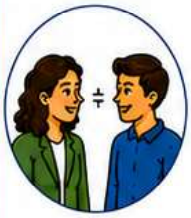


4. Assuming your way is the only way

Different experiences and perspectives matter.



MENTORING IS ✓



1. Supporting exploration

Encourage curiosity, questions, ideas and new perspectives.



2. Encouraging independent growth

Help people discover their own path and voice.



3. Walking alongside

Be a partner in the journey, not the driver.



4. Growing together

Strong mentoring relationships support learning and growth for both people.

GOOD MENTORING EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO GROW, LEAD AND THRIVE.

MENTOR REFLECTION TOOLKIT

1. Do I create a safe space for open and honest conversations?
2. Do I listen before giving advice?
3. Do I recognise different perspectives and experiences?
4. Am I learning alongside the mentee?
5. Are trust and equity present in our relationship?

Strong mentoring relationships don't happen by chance — they are built with care, intention and reflection.

FROM HIERARCHY TO HETERARCHY

Shifting the Power Imbalance in the Mentoring Relationship

THE BIG IDEA

Move from traditional hierarchical mentoring, where power sits with the mentor, to heterarchical mentoring, where power is shared and both people learn and grow together.



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Builds stronger relationships
- Supports teacher professional learning and leadership
- Creates inclusive, respectful and empowering communities
- Leads to better outcomes for children

HIERARCHY (Traditional Model)



- Power sits with the mentor
- One-way guidance
- Based on position, title and authority
- Mentee is dependent
- Fixed roles

HETERARCHY (New Model)



- Power is shared
- Two-way learning and dialogue
- Based on relationship, knowledge and skills
- Mentee is empowered
- Flexible roles

REMEMBER:

Great mentoring happens when we shift from "I teach, you learn" to "We learn together."

Shared power creates stronger relationships, deeper learning, and brighter futures.



WE LEARN BEST TOGETHER!

MENTORING WITH A DIALOGIC APPROACH



From judging teaching to understanding it together.
Building trust, developing teachers, improving learning.

1 BEFORE THE LESSON: CO-PLAN TOGETHER



We talk about goals, strengths and worries.
You are the expert of your class.

2 DURING OBSERVATION: OBSERVE WITH CURIOSITY



I observe to understand,
not to judge.

3 START WITH THE MENTEE'S VOICE: REFLECTION FIRST



Your reflection comes first.
This builds trust and ownership.

4 BUILD A LEARNING CONVERSATION: ASK, DON'T TELL



We explore ideas together.
Curiosity leads to growth.

5 CO-PLAN NEXT STEPS: FOCUS AND CHOICE



We agree on one focus.
You choose what you want to try.

6 KEEP IT ONGOING: EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS



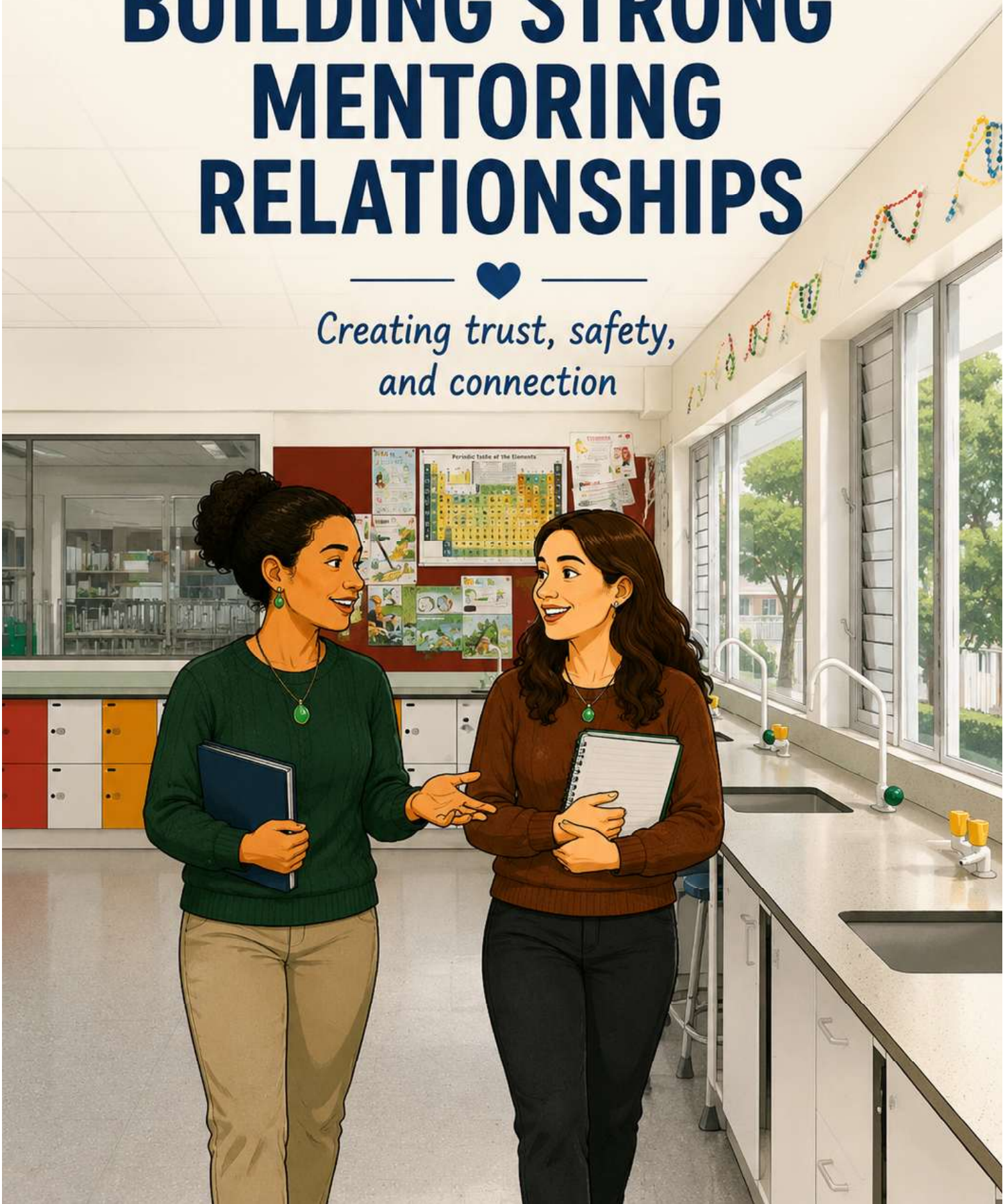
Learning is not one conversation.
It's an ongoing journey together.

WHEN WE LEARN TOGETHER, OUR STUDENTS BENEFIT THE MOST!

CHAPTER 2

BUILDING STRONG MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Creating trust, safety, and connection



RECOGNISE AND PREVENT BIAS

Build a fair, supportive and empowering mentoring relationship

HOW CAN YOU RECOGNISE YOUR OWN BIASES?

1 Notice your first reactions

Ask yourself:

- Why did I think that about this mentee?
- Am I judging based on behaviour or assumption?



➡ Your first thought is often where bias appears.

2 Use reflection after interactions

After a meeting, ask:

- Did I listen enough, or did I dominate the conversation?
- Did I treat them differently from others?
- Did I make assumptions about their ability or motivation?



➡ This builds awareness over time.

3 Look for patterns in your behaviour

Do you give more attention to certain mentees?

Do you feel more comfortable with people similar to you?



➡ Patterns = hidden bias.

4 Ask for feedback (this is powerful)

You could ask your mentee:



➡ This helps you see things you might miss.

5 Slow down your judgement

Instead of:



Try:



➡ Replace judgement with curiosity.

HOW TO PREVENT BIAS FROM AFFECTING THE RELATIONSHIP

Treat mentoring as a partnership, not authority



We learn from each other and grow together.

Focus on the mentee's goals, not your preferences



Their goals guide the journey.

Use questions instead of assumptions



Questions open doors. Assumptions close them.

Give equal opportunities to speak and reflect



Everyone deserves space to contribute and reflect.

AWAKENESS TODAY, STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS TOMORROW.

Bias is human. Awareness is a choice.
When we lead with empathy, curiosity and respect,
we create mentoring relationships where everyone can thrive.



THE JOURNEY OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

How mentoring relationships evolve over time (Kram, 1985)

1 GETTING STARTED

Mentor and mentee set the foundation by building rapport and discussing hopes, goals and expectations.

Mentor: Let's talk about your goals!

Mentee: I would like to learn more about leadership and build my confidence.



- Getting to know each other and building trust
- Clarifying goals and what success looks like
- Establishing communication and expectations

2 BUILDING MOMENTUM

The relationship deepens. Mentors provide the most support for both personal growth and professional development.

Mentor: Here are some ideas that might help...

Mentee: That really helps! Thank you!



- Regular guidance, encouragement and feedback
- Sharing knowledge, resources and experience
- Helping mentee grow in skills and confidence

3 GAINING INDEPENDENCE

The mentee becomes more self-sufficient and begins to take greater ownership of their learning and decisions.

Mentee: I feel ready to try this on my own.

Mentor: You've got this! I'm here if you need me.



- Mentee takes the lead and makes more independent choices
- Mentor steps back while remaining available
- Focus on building confidence and self-direction

4 MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

The relationship shifts into a new form—more equal and collaborative—or comes to a natural close.

Mentor: I've learned so much. Looking forward to what's next!

Mentee: Thank you for believing in me and supporting me all the way!

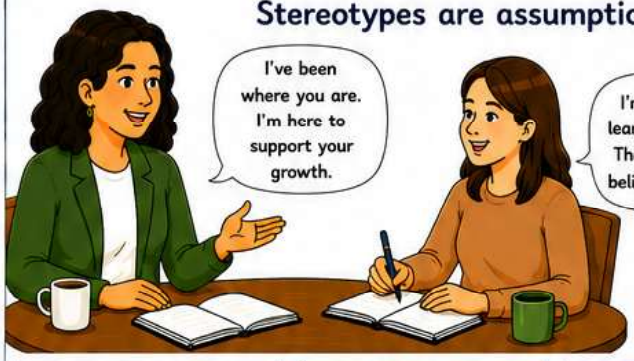


- Relationship becomes more peer-like and collaborative
- Ongoing connection in new ways
- Or, the relationship ends on positive terms

Mentoring is not one-size-fits-all.
Each relationship is unique and may move through these stages at different paces.

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES IN MENTORING

Stereotypes are assumptions. Get to know the person, not the label.



These strategies help mentors build a wider, more accurate and fair picture of their mentee.

1. GET TO KNOW THE PERSON



- Ask open questions.
- Listen to their story.
- Focus on the individual, not assumptions.

2. CHECK YOUR OWN BIASES



- Reflect on your beliefs and biases.
- We all have them – awareness helps us make fairer choices.

3. FOCUS ON STRENGTHS AND POTENTIAL



- Notice what they do well.
- Recognise their efforts and growth.
- See the potential, not the limitations.

4. SEEK MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES



- Talk to others who know your mentee (e.g., teachers, colleagues, peers).
- Gain a broader view.
- Don't rely on one viewpoint.

5. LOOK AT EVIDENCE, NOT ASSUMPTIONS



- Base your understanding on what you see and hear.
- Avoid "they are probably..."
- Use facts, not guesses.

6. CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR OPEN CONVERSATION



- Encourage your mentee to share their views.
- Respect different experiences and perspectives.

7. LEARN ABOUT THEIR CULTURE AND CONTEXT



- Take time to learn and understand.
- Ask respectfully.
- Value their culture, identity and lived experience.

8. GIVE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES



- Provide the same chances to learn, lead and succeed.
- Don't lower or raise expectations based on stereotypes.

9. CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES WHEN YOU HEAR THEM



- Speak up respectfully.
- Model inclusive and fair thinking.
- Help others see the bigger picture.

10. REFLECT AND KEEP GROWING



- Reflect on your actions and impact.
- Ask for feedback.
- Keep learning and improving as a mentor.

QUICK REMINDERS FOR MENTORS

- Be curious, not critical.
- Listen more than you assume.
- Respect differences.
- Focus on growth.
- See the whole person.

When we challenge stereotypes, we build trust, create stronger mentoring relationships and help mentees thrive as their true selves.



KNOW THE PERSON. VALUE THEIR STORY. BELIEVE IN THEIR POTENTIAL.
THAT'S HOW WE MENTOR WITH FAIRNESS AND RESPECT.



COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR MENTORS

LISTEN. PAUSE. UNDERSTAND. GROW TOGETHER.



Use these skills in every conversation to build trust, deeper reflection and support real improvement.

1 SWITCHING OFF YOUR INNER DIALOGUE

Stop thinking about your reply.
Be fully present.



TRY THIS:

- Focus all your attention on the speaker.
- Notice your thoughts, then let them go.
- Stay curious about what they will say next.

INSTEAD OF:
Planning what to say, finishing their sentences, or getting distracted.

2 SENDING OUT THE RIGHT SIGNALS THROUGH NON-VERBAL SIGNALS

Your body language says: "I'm with you."



TRY THIS:

- Maintain natural eye contact.
- Nod and use encouraging facial expressions.
- Keep an open posture and face the speaker.

INSTEAD OF:
Crossed arms, looking at your phone or computer, or rushing the conversation.

3 SUSPENDING YOUR JUDGEMENT

Be curious, not critical.
Everyone is on a learning journey.



TRY THIS:

- Notice any judgement arising—and pause.
- Use curiosity: "Tell me more about that."
- Assume positive intent.

INSTEAD OF:
Jumping to conclusions or giving quick advice.

4 SHOWING EMPATHY

Connect with their feelings and experiences.



TRY THIS:

- Acknowledge their feelings.
- Use phrases like "I can see why that was hard."
- Show you care.

INSTEAD OF:
Dismissing feelings or saying "It's not a big deal."

5 USING PROMPTING, PROBING, PAUSING, AND PARAPHRASING

These tools help deepen thinking.



TRY THIS:

- Ask open questions.
- Probe deeper into key moments.
- Pause and give thinking time.
- Paraphrase to check understanding.

INSTEAD OF:
Asking closed questions, interrupting, or talking too much.

CHECKLIST: SELF-ASSESS YOUR LISTENING AND PAUSE SKILLS

After a mentoring conversation, reflect on your practice. Rate yourself: 1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always

	1	2	3	4
I switched off my inner dialogue and listened fully.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My body language showed I was interested and present.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I suspended my judgement and stayed curious.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I showed empathy and acknowledged their feelings.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I used prompts, probes, pauses and paraphrasing effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐

TOTAL: ☐ /20

CHAPTER 3

NAVIGATING CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Learning to notice, reflect, and support growth



HELPING YOUR MENTEE IDENTIFY AN OBSERVATION FOCUS



MENTOR:

"Student engagement is a great starting point. Let's think together about what engagement might look like in practice."

1. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Observe:

- Who is participating?
- How long do students stay focused?
- Which learners disengage?
- When does engagement increase or decrease?
- Are all learners involved?

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to observe when students seem most engaged and what might be contributing to that?"

2. QUESTIONING SKILLS

Observe:

- Open vs closed questions
- Wait time
- Which students respond
- Follow-up questions

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to focus on questioning and who participates in discussions?"

3. GROUP WORK MANAGEMENT

Observe:

- Student roles
- Participation within groups
- Collaboration
- Clarity of instructions
- Accountability

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to observe how groups work together and whether everyone participates?"

4. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

Observe:

- Clarity
- Student understanding
- Need for repeated explanations
- Student confusion

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to notice whether students understand the task quickly?"

5. BEHAVIOUR AND TRANSITIONS

Observe:

- Time taken to transition
- Off-task behaviour
- Behaviour patterns
- Attention during changes

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to focus on transitions between activities?"

6. DIFFERENTIATION

Observe:

- Support for different learners
- Participation across ability levels
- Adaptations used

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to observe how different learners are supported and included?"

7. STUDENT VOICE

Observe:

- Which students speak
- Which students remain quiet
- Opportunities to contribute

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to notice who has the opportunity to share and contribute?"

8. PACE OF LEARNING

Observe:

- Fast/slow moments
- Waiting time
- Lesson flow

Mentor might ask:
"Would you like me to observe the pace of learning throughout the lesson?"

A USEFUL MENTOR SENTENCE:

Instead of: ✗ "What do you want me to observe?"

Try: "Would you like me to focus on learner engagement, questioning, transitions, classroom presence, group work, or another area? We can decide together."

This removes pressure from the mentee and makes the observation more collaborative.

When we choose a focus together, we create meaningful observations and stronger growth.

OBSERVATION FOCUS:

LEARNER ENGAGEMENT



OBSERVE:

- [ ] Who participated?
- [ ] Which students disengaged?
- [ ] When did engagement increase?
- [ ] When did engagement decrease?
- [ ] Were all learners involved?
- [ ] Which activities generated most interest?
- [ ] Were learners completing the task independently?
- [ ] Which activities generated the highest engagement?
- [ ] Did some learners finish early and become off-task?
- [ ] Did teacher movement/questioning influence engagement?
- [ ] Were students waiting with nothing to do?

EVIDENCE I NOTICED:

Write specific examples, timing, and what you saw and heard.

POSSIBLE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- What signs suggested learners were engaged?'
- Which learners appeared most involved?'
- When did engagement change?
- What might have contributed to that?
- Were there points where learners needed more support?
- How did your movement, questioning, or instructions influence engagement?
- Which activities generated the strongest participation?'

The goal is not to judge, but to understand what is happening so we can support growth.

EXAMPLE: HOW TO DO IT

1 BEFORE THE OBSERVATION



Mentor: "Today, would you like me to focus on learner engagement?"

Mentee: "Yes, please. That would be helpful."

2 DURING THE OBSERVATION



Mentor observes:

- who participates
- who seems disengaged
- when engagement increases or decreases
- which activities create the most interest

3 NOTES & EVIDENCE I NOTICED

- Most learners were engaged during the group discussion.
- Engagement decreased during long directions.
- 2 students were off-task during independent work.
- Hands-on activity re-engaged learners.

4 REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION



Mentor: "I noticed most students were highly engaged during the experiment, but engagement dropped during the long explanation."

Mentee: "Yes, I noticed that too."

5 NEXT STEPS TOGETHER



They decide to try:

- shorter instructions
- more interaction
- varied activities

Goal: Keep more learners engaged for longer.

When we focus on engagement, we help every learner feel seen, included and motivated.

OBSERVATION FOCUS:

QUESTIONING SKILLS

Observe how questioning supports thinking, participation, and learning.



OBSERVE:

- ☐ Were questions mostly open or closed?
- ☐ Was wait time provided?
- ☐ Who answered most questions?
- ☐ Did all learners participate?
- ☐ Were follow-up questions used?
- ☐ Did students explain their thinking?

EVIDENCE I NOTICED:

POSSIBLE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- Who participated most?
- Who did not contribute?
- How long did learners have to think?
- What happened when more wait time was given?
- Which questions generated deeper thinking?
- How did questioning help you understand student thinking?
- Were students explaining answers or only giving short responses?

MENTOR REMINDER: Observe patterns and thinking—not simply whether questioning was "good."

EXAMPLE: HOW TO DO IT

1 BEFORE THE OBSERVATION



Mentor: "Would you like me to focus on questioning and who participates?"

Mentee: "Yes, I want to know if all students are contributing."

2 DURING THE OBSERVATION



Mentor observes:

- who answers
- wait time
- student explanations
- follow-up questions

3 NOTES & EVIDENCE I NOTICED

- Same 3 students answered most questions.
- Wait time averaged 1–2 seconds.
- Students gave longer responses after: "Can you explain why?"

4 REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION



Mentor: "I noticed more students joined in after extra wait time."

Mentee: "I didn't realise I was answering so quickly."

5 NEXT STEPS TOGETHER



Goal: Use questioning that includes all learners and deepens thinking.

Strong questioning opens thinking and gives every learner a voice.

OBSERVATION FOCUS:

GROUP WORK

Observe how students work together, contribute, and stay accountable.



OBSERVE:

- ☐ Participation of all students
- ☐ Roles within groups
- ☐ Collaboration quality
- ☐ Student accountability
- ☐ Clarity of instructions

EVIDENCE I NOTICED:

Write specific examples, timing, and what you saw and heard.

POSSIBLE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- Were all students actively contributing?
- How were roles assigned and used?
- How well did students listen to and build on each other's ideas?
- Were students staying on task?
- What evidence shows accountability within the group?
- Were instructions clear and understood by all?
- What adjustments might strengthen group work next time?

MENTOR REMINDER: Look for patterns in participation, collaboration, and outcomes.

EXAMPLE: HOW TO DO IT

1 BEFORE THE OBSERVATION



Mentor: "Would you like me to focus on how your groups collaborate and include everyone?"

Mentee: "Yes, that would be really helpful!"

2 DURING THE OBSERVATION



Mentor observes:

- Participation of all students
- Roles within groups
- Quality of collaboration
- Student accountability
- Clarity of instructions

3 NOTES & EVIDENCE I NOTICED

- All 5 students contributed during discussion.
- Roles were clear: leader, recorder, timekeeper.
- Students built on each other's ideas.
- Group stayed on task.
- Instructions were clear and referenced.

4 REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION



Mentor: "I noticed everyone had a role, and you asked quiet students for their ideas."

Mentee: "I'll continue using roles and give more wait time before moving on."

5 NEXT STEPS TOGETHER

- ☑ Use role cards for each group
- ☑ Plan thinking time before sharing
- ☑ Check in with groups during the task

Goal: Strong group work builds collaboration, confidence, and deeper learning.

Strong group work builds collaboration, accountability, and collective success.

OBSERVATION FOCUS:

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

Observe how instructions are given, understood, and help learners get started.



OBSERVE:

- [ ] Were instructions clear and easy to understand?
- [ ] Did students begin the task quickly?
- [ ] Did students ask repeated questions?
- [ ] Were learners asking peers what to do?
- [ ] Did students appear confused?
- [ ] Were instructions broken into steps/chunks?
- [ ] Did the teacher model an example?
- [ ] Did the teacher provide visual support?
- [ ] Did the teacher check for understanding?
- [ ] Were learners able to explain the task back?
- [ ] Did all learners seem equally clear about expectations?
- [ ] Was additional clarification needed after starting?
- [ ] Did the teacher repeat instructions several times?
- [ ] Did some learners begin incorrectly?

EVIDENCE I NOTICED:

Write specific examples, timing, and what you saw and heard.

POSSIBLE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- How did you know students understood the task?
- What signs suggested learners were ready to begin?
- Which learners needed extra clarification?
- Did modelling or examples support understanding?
- What happened after instructions were given?
- If you taught this lesson again, what would you keep or change?
- What patterns did you notice?

MENTOR REMINDER: Look for evidence of clarity, understanding, and readiness to learn.

EXAMPLE: HOW TO DO IT

1 BEFORE THE OBSERVATION



Mentor: "Would you like me to focus on how clear your instructions are and how students respond?"

Mentee: "Yes, that would be really helpful!"

2 DURING THE OBSERVATION



Mentor observes:

- How instructions are given
- Student reactions
- Questions asked
- Time to begin
- Need for clarification

3 NOTES & EVIDENCE I NOTICED

- Instructions were clear and broken into steps.
- Most students began within 1–2 minutes.
- 3 students asked the same question.
- Teacher used a model and visual example.
- Checked for understanding.

4 REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION



Mentor: "I noticed most students began quickly, but some needed clarification on step 2."

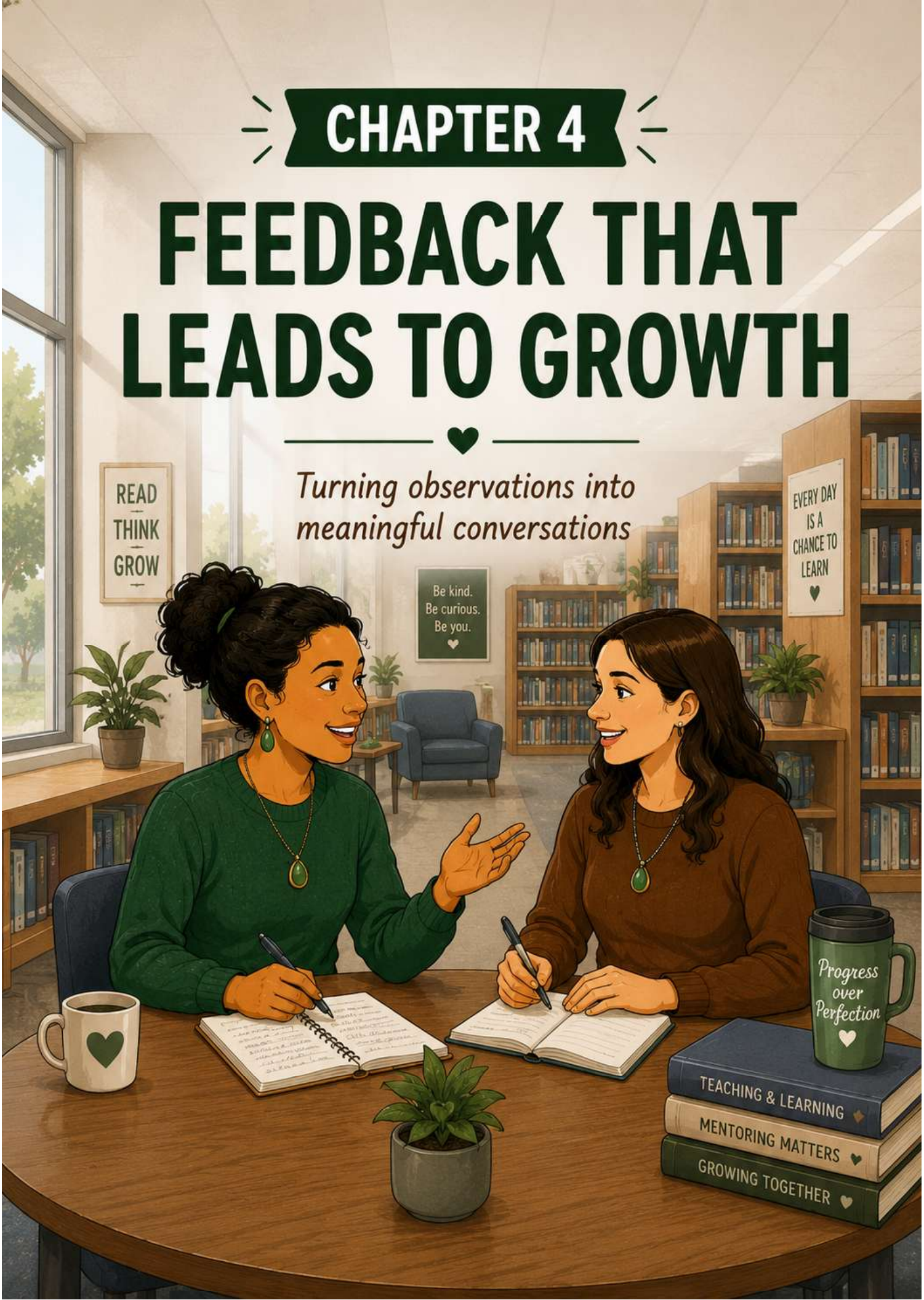
Mentee: "I'll try adding a visual and checking in after each step."

5 NEXT STEPS TOGETHER

- ☑ Add visuals for key steps
- ☑ Check understanding after each step
- ☑ Encourage students to explain the task back

Goal: Clear instructions lead to confident learners and smoother learning.

Clear instructions create confident learners and smoother learning.


CHAPTER 4
FEEDBACK THAT LEADS TO GROWTH
Turning observations into meaningful conversations
READ
THINK
GROW
Be kind.
Be curious.
Be you.
EVERY DAY IS A CHANCE TO LEARN
Progress over Perfection
TEACHING & LEARNING
MENTORING MATTERS
GROWING TOGETHER



TYPES OF FEEDBACK FOR MENTORS

Feedback is a gift for growth!

Good feedback is: Supportive • Specific • Relevant • Timely
It works best when trust has been built.



BEFORE GIVING FEEDBACK...



LISTEN
Listen actively and understand the context.

RESPECT
Show respect and believe in their potential.

PARTNER
You are a partner in their learning journey.

PURPOSE
Focus on improvement, not evaluation.

FOCUS
Give feedback that is specific and useful.

1 FORMAL FEEDBACK

Planned and structured.
Given after an observed lesont or a specific episode.



EXAMPLE
During your reading lesson, I noticed how you used think-alouds to model comprehension. Students were engaged and able to make connections. Let's reflect on what worked well and what we could strengthen next time.

2 INFORMAL FEEDBACK

Spontaneous and flexible.
Can be given at any time during daily interactions.



EXAMPLE
During our conversation just now, I noticed you rephrased the question when students were unsure. It really helped them think more deeply. Keep doing that!

3 FORMATIVE FEEDBACK

Ongoing feedback to improve teaching.
Given during the learning process to adjust and grow.



EXAMPLE
Your lesson plan is strong! Maybe we can add a clearer modelling step and a check-for-understanding question to support all learners.

4 SUMMATIVE FEEDBACK

Evaluates learning at the end.
Compares performance to previous standards and expected outcomes.



EXAMPLE
You met the lesson objectives and most students showed growth in identifying main ideas. Continue building on your questioning. strategies to deepen their responses.

5 CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Focused on what happened.
Provides positive or negative observations about current teaching practice.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK (Maintain)
I noticed how you used visual organizers during the lesson. Students were able to organize their ideas clearly. Great job supporting their thinking!



NEGATIVE FEEDBACK (Correct)
I noticed some students were off-task during group work. Let's talk about how we can set clearer expectations and monitor the groups.



6 CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDFORWARD

Focused on the future.
Provides future-focused suggestions to improve upcoming teaching.

POSITIVE FEEDFORWARD (Enhance)
Next time, try using sentence starters during discussions to encourage quieter students to share their ideas.



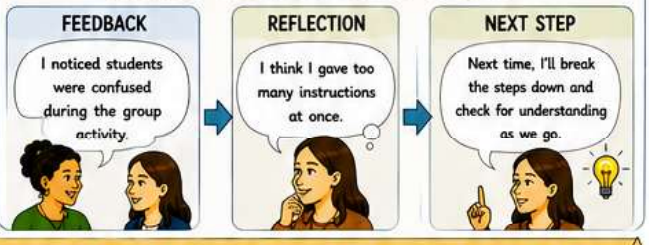
NEGATIVE FEEDFORWARD (Adjust)
Next lesson, consider breaking instructions into smaller steps and checking understanding after each step.



TIPS FOR GIVING GREAT FEEDBACK

- ✓ Be specific: talk about actions, not the person.
- ✓ Be balanced: highlight strengths and areas to grow.
- ✓ Be solution-focused: suggest strategies, not just problems.
- ✓ Use "I noticed...." and "What do you think....?"
- ✓ Check understanding: invite reflection and questions.
- ✓ End with encouragement and next steps.

EXAMPLE: FROM FEEDBACK TO GROWTH



REMEMBER!

Your feedback today shapes tomorrow's confident teacher!

FEEDBACK BUILDS TRUST, CONFIDENCE AND BETTER TEACHING PRACTICE.

GIVING POWERFUL FEEDBACK AS A MENTOR

Support. Guide. Grow.

Feedback is not about judging. It's about helping your mentee improve!

I can learn, grow and become a better teacher!

Good feedback helps your mentee understand what happened, what to keep, and what to do next.

1 CONNECT FEEDBACK TO REAL PRACTICE

Link feedback to something that actually happened.

During group work, some students became off-task after about 10 minutes.

TRY THIS:
- Describe the situation, not the person.
- Focus on what you saw or heard.

2 FOCUS ON ONE THING AT A TIME

Avoid overwhelming your mentee. Choose one strength and one area to improve.

Let's focus on questioning strategies in this lesson.

TRY THIS:
- One area to celebrate.
- One area to develop.

3 LINK CURRENT PRACTICE TO DESIRED PRACTICE

Show the path forward.

What happened → What to do next

TRY THIS:
- Explain what could help improve next time.

4 GIVE TIMELY AND RELEVANT FEEDBACK

Feedback is most useful when it is timely and meets the mentee's needs.

Since you're working on engagement, let's look at how students responded during this activity.

TRY THIS:
- Give feedback as close to the lesson as possible and focus on their goals.

5 PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Feedback must lead to action.

You could try giving clearer instructions before the activity starts.

TRY THIS:
- Offer specific, doable strategies or next steps.

6 SHOW EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

Put yourself in your mentee's position.

I understand that managing a group work can be challenging, especially with this class.

TRY THIS:
- Acknowledge their effort and the challenges they face.

7 FOCUS ON PRACTICE, NOT THE PERSON

Talk about behaviour and teaching choices—not the person.

✗ You are not clear.

✓ The instructions were not clear in that moment.

TRY THIS:
- Use "I noticed..." instead of "You are..."
- Keep it professional and respectful.

8 EXPLAIN THE CONTEXT (VERY IMPORTANT!)

Make it clear that feedback is situational, not universal.

This worked in this lesson, but different classes may respond differently. It's one approach you could try.

TRY THIS:
- Help them see the why behind the feedback.

9 CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Make sure your mentee understands and feels clear.

Can you tell me how you see this situation?

Yes, I think I understand. It means...

TRY THIS:
- Ask questions and listen.
- Summarize their thinking.

10 RESPECT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Stay open-minded and value their ideas.

That's interesting. Have you ever considered another way to approach it?

TRY THIS:
- Invite reflection and dialogue.
- There can be more than one good way!

11 RECOGNISE DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

Adapt your feedback to how your mentee learns best.

- Some need examples.
- Some need questions.
- Some need time to reflect.

TRY THIS:
- Be flexible. What works for one person may not work for another.

12 DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFO? BE HONEST.

It's okay to pause and think.

Well, to be honest, I need to think more about this situation before giving feedback.

TRY THIS:
- Seek more information or observe again before offering feedback.

EXAMPLE: FROM UNHELPFUL FEEDBACK TO HELPFUL FEEDBACK

✗ UNHELPFUL FEEDBACK

Your lesson wasn't engaging. You need to be more prepared.

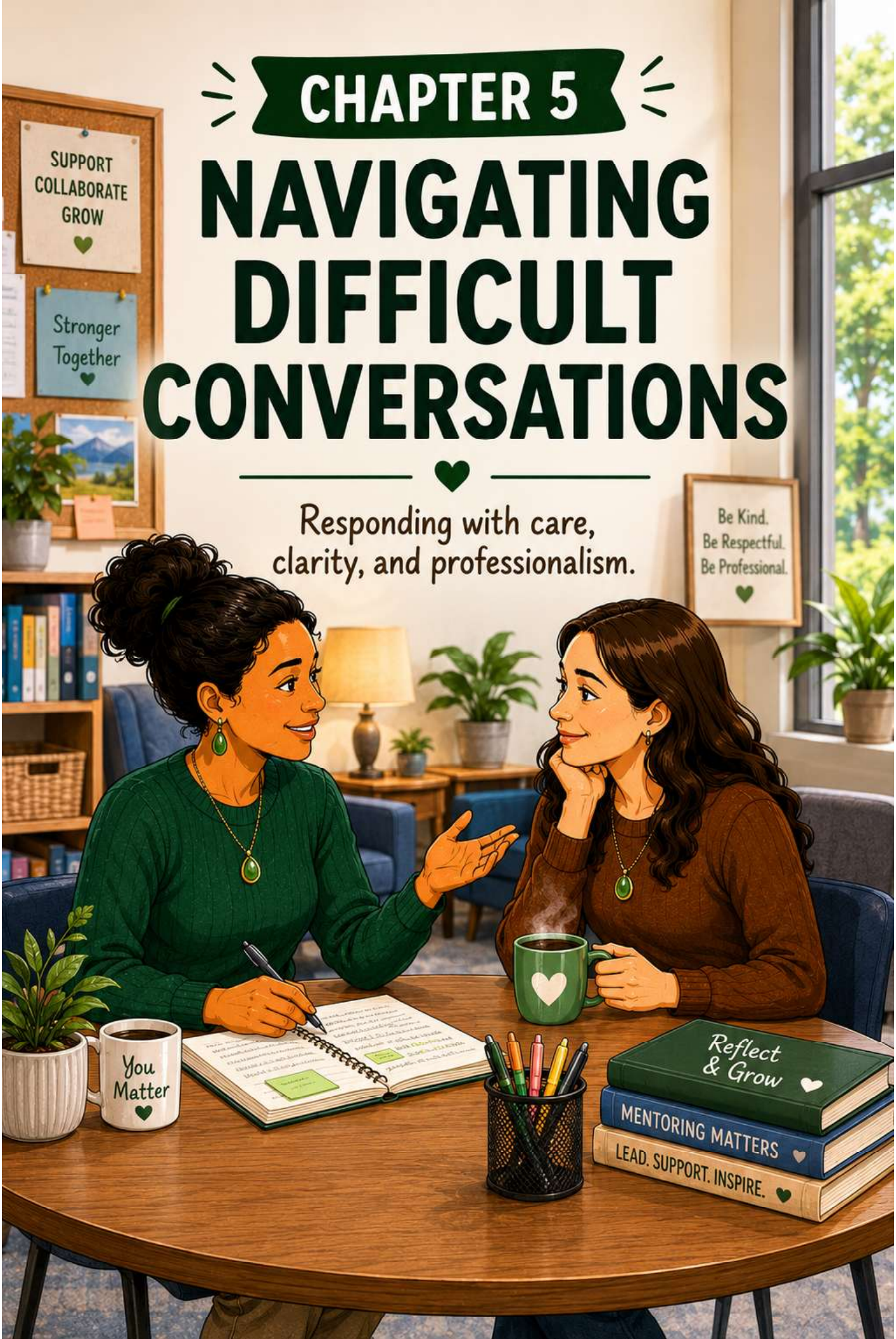
Why it's not helpful:
- Too general
- Focuses on the person
- No clear next steps
- Doesn't build confidence

✓ HELPFUL FEEDBACK

During the lesson, I noticed that after 15 minutes, student participation dropped. Maybe we can try adding a quick think-pair-share activity to re-engage them.

Why it's helpful:
- Specific and based on evidence
- Focuses on practice, not person
- Offers a strategy
- Promotes improvement and confidence

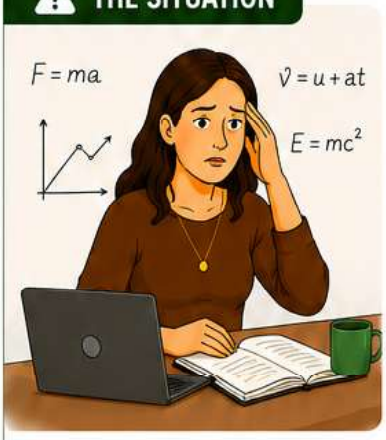
GOOD FEEDBACK TODAY = BETTER TEACHING TOMORROW ♥ TOGETHER WE GROW!


CHAPTER 5
NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS
Responding with care, clarity, and professionalism.
SUPPORT
COLLABORATE
GROW
Stronger Together
Be Kind.
Be Respectful.
Be Professional.
You Matter
Reflect & Grow
MENTORING MATTERS
LEAD. SUPPORT. INSPIRE.

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

How a mentor can respond when a teacher feels overwhelmed.

THE SITUATION



- Many students lack the basic math skills needed for physics.
- She spends much of the class teaching math, limiting time for physics.
- A few students are excelling, but most are struggling.
- Expectations at school are very high.
- She feels torn, overwhelmed, and worried she is letting both groups down.

MENTOR MINDSET

- Listen with empathy and without judgment.
- Validate her feelings and acknowledge the complexity of the challenge.
- Focus on what is within her control.
- Partner to explore realistic strategies and next steps.
- Encourage self-compassion and celebrate small wins.

HOW A MENTOR CAN RESPOND: A SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATION ROADMAP

1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE TO SHARE



Build trust and show you're on her side.

2 CLARIFY AND UNDERSTAND THE FULL PICTURE



Ask open questions and listen deeply.

3 VALIDATE AND NORMALIZE HER EXPERIENCE



Normalize the struggle while acknowledging her dedication.

4 REFRAME THE CHALLENGE



Help her see the impact of her efforts.

5 EXPLORE PRIORITIES TOGETHER



Help her focus on what matters most.

6 BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE STRATEGIES



Co-create practical ideas that fit her context.

7 PLAN SMALL, REALISTIC STEPS



Focus on manageable actions to build momentum.

8 CHECK IN AND ENCOURAGE



Continue the conversation and celebrate progress.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO SUGGEST

- Use quick math warm-ups or stations.
- Provide targeted mini-lessons or review guides.
- Use peer tutoring or math buddies.
- Offer enrichment tasks or extension options for high achievers.
- Use flexible grouping based on needs.
- Leverage resources: online tools, videos, or department support.
- Celebrate growth, not just grades.

USEFUL QUESTIONS TO GUIDE

- What data or evidence can help us understand student needs better?
- Which strategies have worked, even a little?
- What support or resources do you need?
- Who else on your team can help?
- What would success look like in 4–6 weeks?

MENTOR REMINDERS

- You don't have to have all the answers—your role is to support and guide.
- Focus on solutions, not just problems.
- Encourage reflection and self-compassion.
- Small steps today lead to big changes over time.

YOU'RE NOT JUST A MENTOR—YOU'RE A PARTNER IN GROWTH.

Together, we can help every student succeed.



NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Reflect. Understand. Grow Together.



Our goal is to reflect, learn and grow together for our learners.

⚠ THE SITUATION

The mentee is not meeting their responsibilities: not completing lesson plans and arriving late frequently to meetings.

Lesson plans are not completed.



Arriving late to meetings.



Responsibilities are affecting the partnership and learner support.



We can work together to improve.



Remember: The goal is not to criticise, but to understand the situation, reflect together and make a plan for improvement.

EXAMPLE: HOW TO REACT AND COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR MENTEE

1 START WITH RESPECT AND PURPOSE

Open the conversation with a positive and clear purpose.



Mentor Tip: Create a safe and respectful space.

2 INVITE YOUR MENTEE'S PERSPECTIVE

Listen first. There may be things you don't know.



Mentor Tip: Listen with genuine curiosity and without interrupting.

3 SHARE OBSERVATIONS WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Be specific and stick to the facts.



Mentor Tip: Be specific, stick to the facts and avoid blame.

4 EXPLAIN THE IMPACT

Help your mentee understand why these concerns matter.



Mentor Tip: Connect actions to their impact on learning and growth.

5 INVITE REFLECTION

Ask questions that help your mentee reflect and think deeply.



Mentor Tip: Powerful questions lead to deeper understanding.

6 ACKNOWLEDGE STRENGTHS

Recognise what your mentee does well or is trying well.



Mentor Tip: Balance challenge with encouragement to build confidence and motivation.

7 CO-CONSTRUCT STRATEGIES

Work together to find practical solutions that will help.



Mentor Tip: Collaborate and guide your mentee to identify realistic strategies.

8 CREATE AN ACTION PLAN AND FOLLOW UP

Agree on specific actions, then check in and celebrate.



Mentor Tip: Small consistent steps lead to big progress. Follow up and celebrate wins.

LANGUAGE TO AVOID



- ✗ "You are careless."
- ✗ This is unacceptable.
- ✗ You always mess up.
- ✗ You don't care about your tasks.
- ✗ Why can't you just...?
- ✗ This is unprofessional.

TRY SAYING INSTEAD



- ✓ I've noticed some patterns I'm concerned about."
- ✓ Let's work together to find a solution."
- ✓ What do you think might help?
- ✓ What can I do to support you?
- ✓ I believe you can improve and I'm

TOGETHER, WE CAN WORK PROFESSIONALLY AND PRIORITISE OUR LEARNERS



GOOD CONVERSATIONS TODAY = BETTER TEACHING TOMORROW ❤ TOGETHER WE GROW!

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



Respectful. Supportive. Solution-Focused.



Our goal is to reflect, learn and grow together for our learners.

⚠ THE SITUATION

You yelled at one student because of the poor behaviour of the class.









Remember: The goal is not to judge what happened, but to understand, reflect and plan for improvement together.

EXAMPLE: HOW A MENTOR CAN RESPOND AND COMMUNICATE WITH A MENTEE

1 START WITH RESPECT AND PURPOSE

Open the conversation with a positive and clear purpose.



Mentor Tip: Create a safe and respectful space.

2 INVITE YOUR MENTEE'S PERSPECTIVE

Listen first. There may be things you don't know.



Mentor Tip: Listen with genuine curiosity and without interrupting.

3 SHARE OBSERVATIONS WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Share what you have noticed. Use facts, not opinions.



Mentor Tip: Be specific, calm and professional. Focus on actions, not the person.

4 EXPLAIN THE IMPACT

Help your mentee understand why those expectations matter.



Mentor Tip: Connect actions to their impact on learning, relationships and growth.

5 INVITE REFLECTION

Ask questions that help your mentee reflect and think deeply.



Mentor Tip: Powerful questions lead to deeper understanding.

6 ACKNOWLEDGE STRENGTHS

Recognise their efforts and reinforce what is going well.



Mentor Tip: Balance challenge with encouragement. It builds confidence and motivation.

7 CO-CONSTRUCT STRATEGIES

Work together to find practical solutions that will help.



Mentor Tip: Collaborate and guide your mentee to identify practical strategies.

8 CREATE AN ACTION PLAN AND FOLLOW UP

Agree on specific actions, then review and celebrate growth.



Mentor Tip: Small consistent steps lead to big growth. Follow up and celebrate wins.

LANGUAGE TO AVOID

- ✗ You are unprofessional.
- ✗ You always lose control.
- ✗ You never listen to your students.
- ✗ You need more training.
- ✗ You must not do that.



TRY SAYING INSTEAD

- ✓ Let's reflect on what happened.
- ✓ What strategies could help you next time?
- ✓ What were you feeling in that moment?
- ✓ How can I support you?
- ✓ What do you think would work better?



TOGETHER, WE CAN MODEL PROFESSIONALISM AND INSPIRE OUR LEARNERS!

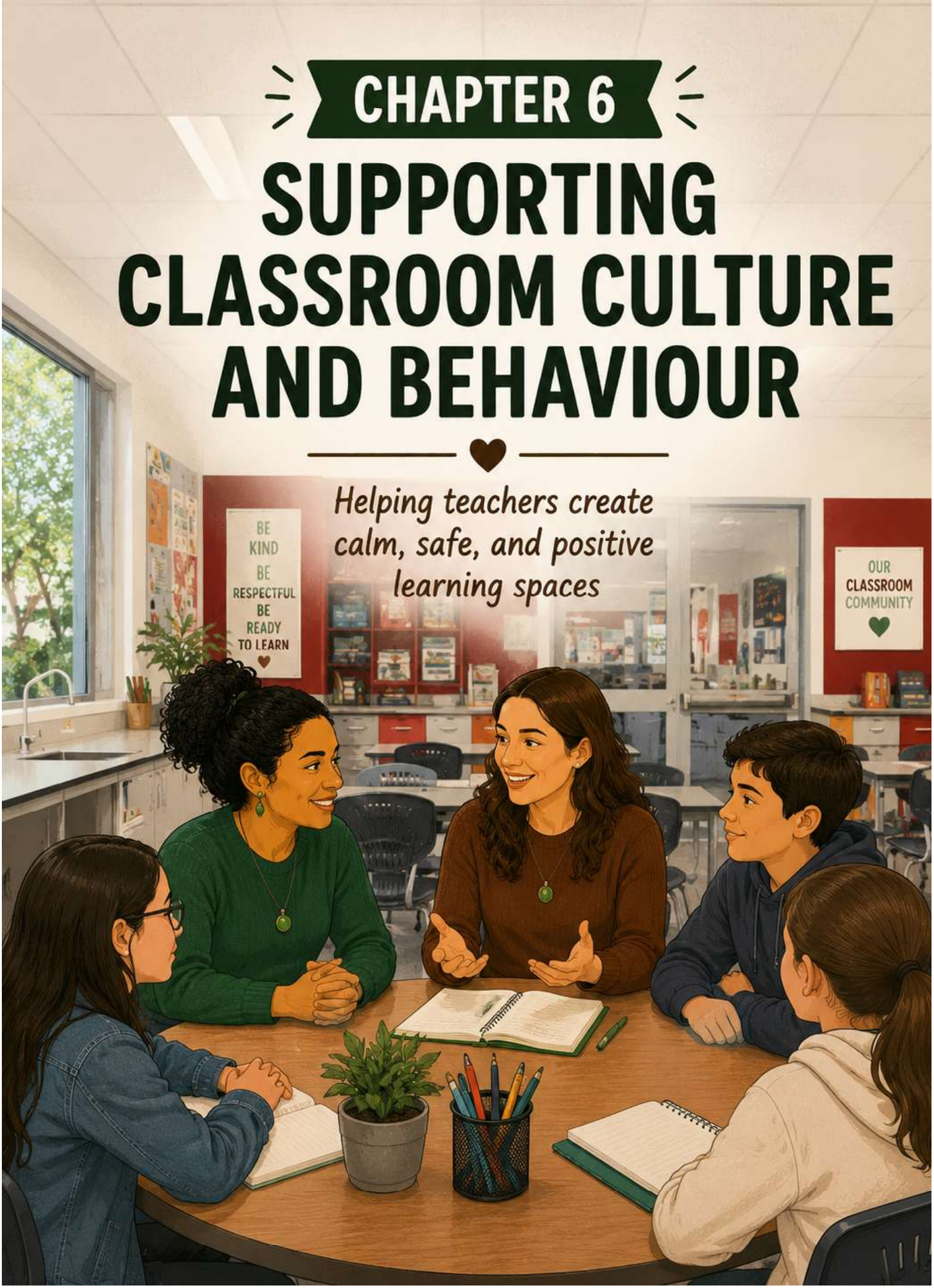


GOOD CONVERSATIONS TODAY = BETTER TEACHING TOMORROW ♥ TOGETHER WE GROW!

CHAPTER 6

SUPPORTING CLASSROOM CULTURE AND BEHAVIOUR

Helping teachers create calm, safe, and positive learning spaces



SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND LEARNING

Creating conditions where all learners can *thrive*.



Creating a positive learning environment is essential for helping students learn and succeed. When students feel safe, supported, and engaged, they are more likely to participate actively in learning and achieve positive outcomes.

However, the learning process can sometimes be disrupted by challenging behaviours displayed by individual students or groups of students. These situations can affect engagement, relationships, and the overall classroom climate.

In this section, we will explore practical strategies that teachers can use to respond to these challenges. The purpose of these strategies is not simply to manage behaviour, but to teach, support, and restore positive participation in learning.

It is important to remember that no single strategy works in every situation. Effective teachers adapt their responses based on the needs of their students, the classroom context, and the purpose of the intervention.

Positive behaviour support is about learning, relationships, and belonging.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MATRIX

What does successful participation in learning look like?

ON TIME

Am I ready to learn?

- Enter the classroom promptly.
- Bring all required learning equipment to every lesson.
- Phone and headphones are in your bag before learning begins.
- Place your bag under the desk/bench.
- Begin the "Do Now" activity immediately.
- Be prepared for practical activities.



ENGAGED

Am I actively learning?

- Listen carefully to instructions.
- Participate in class discussions.
- Stay focused on the task.
- Ask questions when support is needed.
- Complete work to the best of their ability.
- Persist when learning becomes challenging.
- Work independently / collaboratively when required.
- Use class time productively.
- Remain on approved learning activities and websites.



RESPECTFUL

Am I showing respect?

- Raise your hand before speaking.
- Use a calm and appropriate voice.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Use appropriate language.
- Respect different opinions and perspectives.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Move safely around the classroom.
- Respect the property of others.
- Take care of desks, chairs, and classroom equipment.
- Use equipment only for its intended purpose.
- Keep the classroom clean and tidy.
- Keep notebooks and learning materials neat and tidy.
- Wear the correct uniform appropriately.



SUPPORTIVE

Am I helping others succeed?

- Include others in learning activities.
- Work collaboratively with classmates.
- Encourage others to participate.
- Celebrate the success of others.
- Demonstrate patience when working with others.
- Welcome new students and visitors.
- Help maintain a positive classroom culture.



Together, these behaviours create a positive learning environment where all students can thrive and succeed.

START SMALL:
FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST

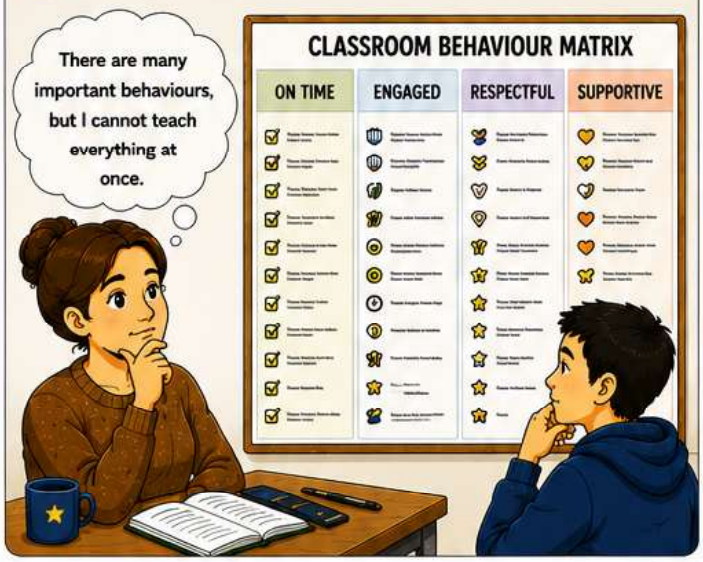
We cannot teach every behaviour at once.
Start by identifying a small number that will make the biggest difference.

The Classroom Behaviour Matrix shows many behaviours that support learning.
However, it is neither realistic nor necessary to teach every behaviour at once.

Focus on a small number of high-impact behaviours and teach them consistently.
Students are more likely to succeed when behaviours are explicitly taught, practised, reinforced, and revisited.



1 THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT BEHAVIOURS



2 IDENTIFY A SMALL NUMBER OF HIGH-IMPACT BEHAVIOURS



3 ASK YOURSELF



4 START WITH A FEW



Focus on 2–4 behaviours rather than trying to change everything at once.

Small improvements implemented consistently often have a greater impact than attempting to change everything at once.

A FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR





Positive behaviour is not assumed.
It is taught, practised, supported, reinforced, reflected on, and responded to when needed.

1 TEACH

Explicitly teach and model the behaviour.

- Describe what it looks like, sounds like, and when it should occur.
- Model, practise, and give feedback until students are fluent.



2 REMIND

Prompt students before the behaviour is needed.

- Use verbal prompts, visual cues, and non-verbal signals.
- Timely reminders increase the likelihood of success.



3 PROVIDE CHOICE

Offer choices that guide positive decisions.

- Provide options that maintain dignity and ownership.
- Guide students back to the expected behaviour.



4 PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Acknowledge and reinforce the behaviour you want to see.

- Be specific.
- Notice attempts, effort, and progress.
- Catch students doing the right thing.



5 REFLECTION

Support students to think about their choices and take ownership.

- What happened?
- What could you do differently next time?
- What would help you be successful tomorrow?



6 RESPONSE

Apply logical consequences when needed.

- Use fair and predictable consequences.
- Ensure they are logical, related to the behaviour, and educative.
- Focus on learning from the experience and making better choices.





POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

The goal is learning, responsibility, and belonging.

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK

PHONE & HEADPHONES IN YOUR BAG

1 TEACH

Explicitly teach, model and practise the routine.

- Enter classroom
- Take out equipment
- Switch phone off
- Phone & headphones in your bag
- Bag under desk
- Begin Do Now



2 REMIND

Prompt before the behaviour is needed.



3 PROVIDE CHOICE

Give students a choice that keeps the expectation.



PHONE & HEADPHONES AWAY BECAUSE IT PREVENTS ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

4 PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Notice and acknowledge when students follow the expectation.



5 REFLECTION

Support students to think about their choices and plan for next time.



Possible supports:

- Sit closer to teacher
- Phone on teacher desk at start
- Self-monitor check-in

6 RESPONSE

Use fair, logical and consistent responses when needed.



REMEMBER

We are not trying to win an argument.
We are helping students learn, stay focused, and take responsibility for their choices.



WHEN CONSEQUENCES ARE NOT WORKING

Understanding the reason behind the behaviour



ASK: WHY IS THE BEHAVIOUR STILL HAPPENING?

1 SKILL PROBLEM

The student wants to comply but struggles to do so.



EXAMPLES

- Poor self-regulation
- Habit of checking notifications
- Difficulty concentrating

POSSIBLE SUPPORTS

- Phone on teacher desk
- Check-in/ check-out routine
- Self-monitoring sheet
- Seat closer to the teacher

ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM

The student uses the phone because learning is not engaging.



EXAMPLES

- Work is too difficult
- Work is too easy
- Student feels lost or unsupported

POSSIBLE SUPPORTS

- More scaffolding and support
- Additional challenge
- More frequent teacher interaction
- Smaller learning steps and goals

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM

The behaviour is connected to teacher–student relationships.



EXAMPLES

- Previous conflict
- Lack of trust
- Student seeking attention or control

POSSIBLE SUPPORTS

- Restorative conversation
- Positive interactions and encouragement
- Rebuilding trust and connection
- A fresh start

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

The classroom environment makes success difficult.



EXAMPLES

- Sitting beside friends
- Constant distractions
- No clear routines or expectations

POSSIBLE SUPPORTS

- Seating adjustment
- Clearer routines and expectations
- Reduce distractions and noise
- Structured transitions and movement

If consequences are not changing behaviour, **investigate the reason** behind the behaviour rather than simply **increasing the consequence.**



Our goal is learning, growth, and responsible choices. | Teach. Support. Understand. Empower.

CHAPTER 7

SUPPORTING NEW AND INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS

Helping teachers navigate the New Zealand education system with confidence

Nau Mai, Haere Mai
Welcome

You don't need to know everything today. Let's learn together.

Thank you. I'm excited to begin my journey.

EVERY LEARNER MATTERS
WHĀNAU
RESPECT • LEARN • GROW

SCHOOL TIMETABLE
MON
TUE
WED
THU
FRI

LESSON PLAN
- ✓ Learning Intentions
- ✓ Success Criteria
- ✓ Activities
- ✓ Differentiation
- ✓ Reflection

ATTENDANCE

MY PLANNER



Understanding Whānau and Community Partnerships



Navigating KAMAR and School Systems
- Attendance
- Reports
- Pastoral notes
- Student information



Planning Effective Lessons



Understanding School Policies and Procedures
- Health and safety
- Reporting
- Professional standards
- Confidentiality
- School expectations



Practical School Information and Routines
- Daily routines
- Using resources
- Communication
- ICT and systems

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI
INCLUSIVE PRACTICES
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
CULTURE • LANGUAGE • IDENTITY

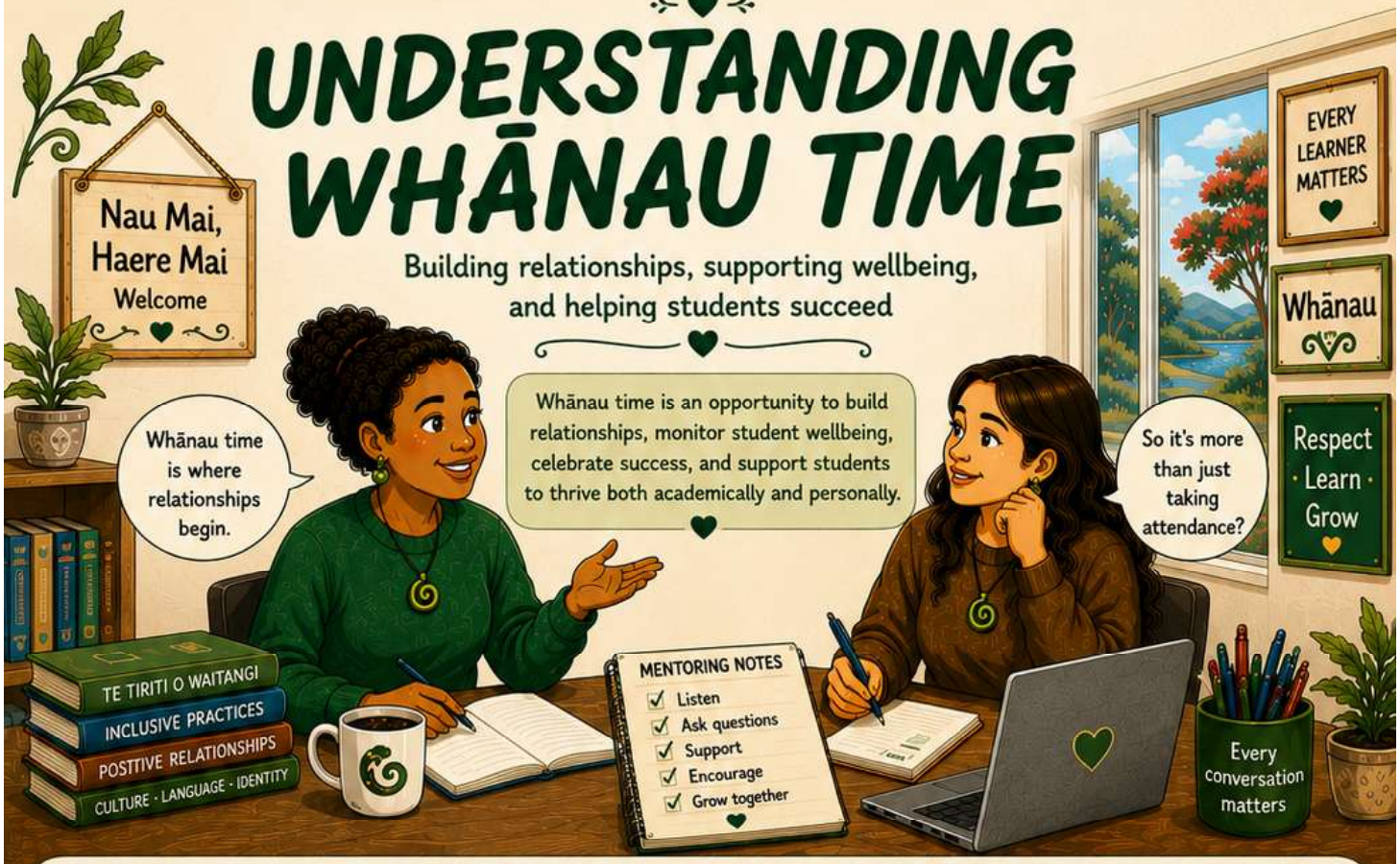
NEW TEACHER CHECKLIST
- ✓ Get to know students
- ✓ Build relationships
- ✓ Plan and teach
- ✓ Seek feedback
- ✓ Reflect and grow
- ✓ Ask for support

REFLECT
CONNECT
SUPPORT
GROW

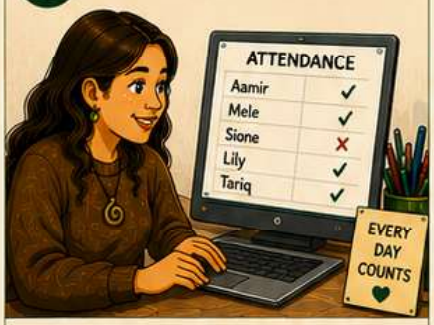
Every great teacher was once new.
With guidance, reflection, and support, confidence grows over time.

UNDERSTANDING WHĀNAU TIME

Building relationships, supporting wellbeing, and helping students succeed



1 ATTENDANCE



Monitor attendance and identify patterns of absence. Follow up and encourage regular attendance.

2 ACADEMIC PROGRESS



Track achievement, assessment completion, and learning goals. Celebrate progress and plan next steps.

3 STUDENT WELLBEING



Listen to students, understand their challenges, and provide support when needed.

4 CELEBRATING SUCCESS



Recognise attendance, effort, improvement, and achievements. Celebrate big and small wins!

5 SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS



Promote positive habits and reinforce school values. Help students understand what it means to be respectful, engaged, on time, and supportive.

6 FAMILY CONNECTIONS

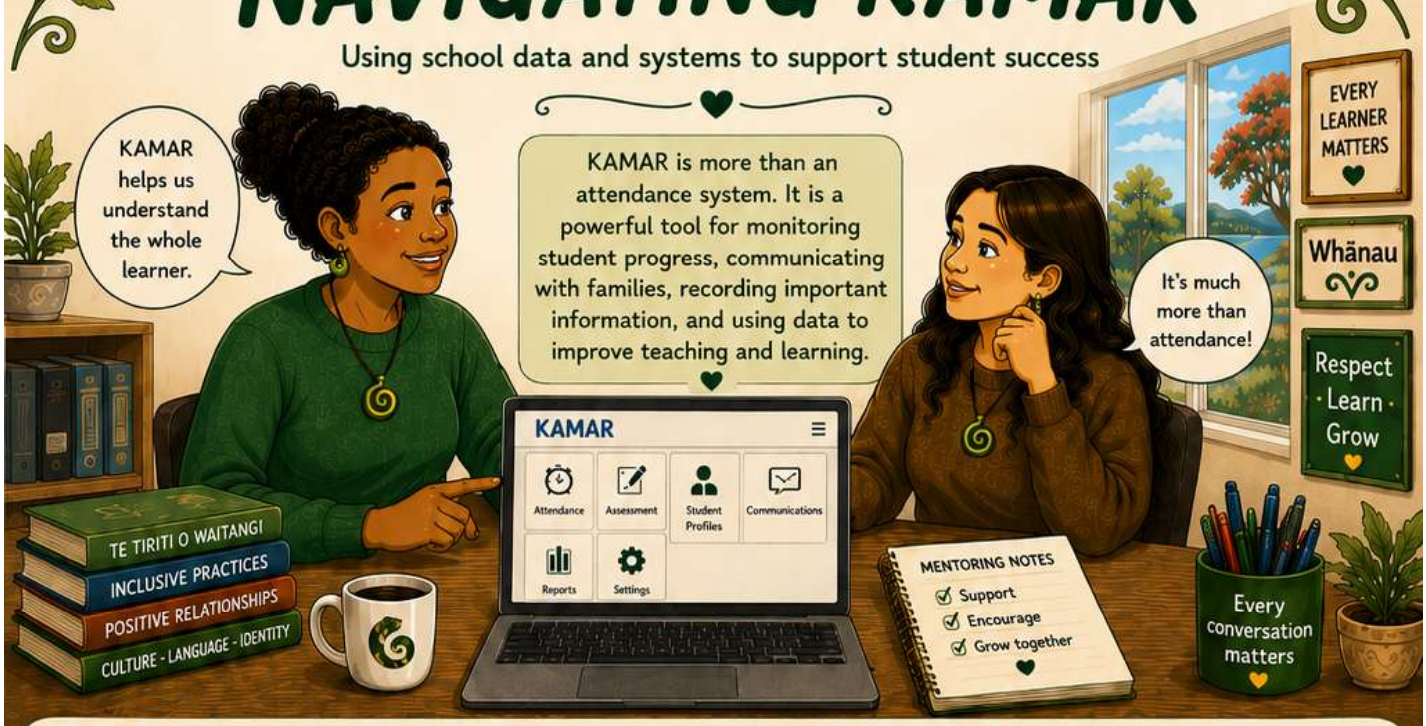


Communicate with parents and whānau to recognise success, follow up on concerns, and strengthen partnerships.

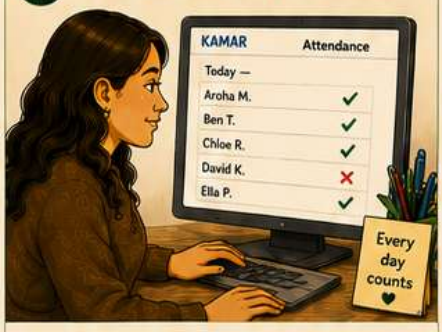
Students learn best when they feel known, valued, and connected.

NAVIGATING KAMAR

Using school data and systems to support student success

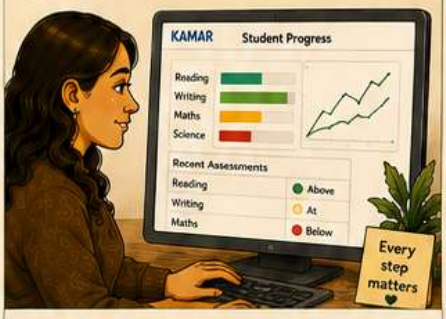


1 RECORDING ATTENDANCE



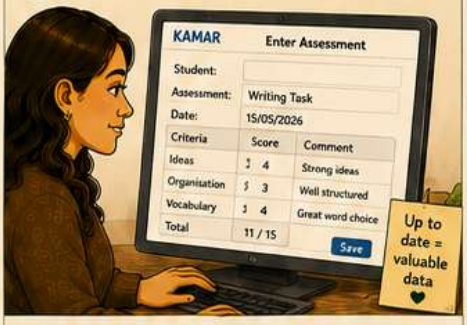
Record attendance accurately and identify patterns of absence.

2 TRACKING ACADEMIC PROGRESS



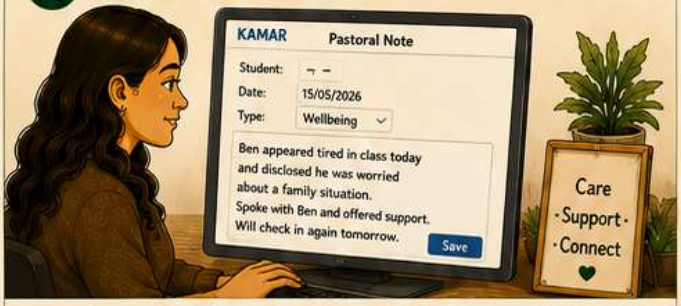
Monitor achievement, assessment completion, and student progress.

3 RECORDING ASSESSMENT RESULTS



Keep achievement information up to date and accessible.

4 PASTORAL NOTES



Record important wellbeing information and support actions.

5 COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES



Share achievements, attendance concerns, and important information.

MENTOR REMINDER

A mentor should explicitly teach their mentee how to:

- ☑ Record attendance
- ☑ Enter assessment results
- ☑ Write professional pastoral notes
- ☑ Access student achievement data
- ☑ Communicate with parents and caregivers
- ☑ Navigate key KAMAR functions confidently

Record simple videos that help your mentee understand the process and revisit the learning when needed.

Great mentors build confident teachers.

Good decisions are built on good information.
Effective use of KAMAR helps teachers support every learner.

HOW TO WRITE SCHOOL REPORT



Clear and professional report writing helps families understand student progress, celebrate achievement, and identify next steps for learning.



1 Understanding the Purpose of Reports

Reports should inform, encourage, and provide clear next steps for learning.



♥ Remember:

Inform

Encourage

Next steps

2 Writing About Achievement

Use specific evidence to describe what the student knows, understands, and can do.



Instead of:
John is doing well.

Write:
John can apply algebraic techniques independently and consistently completes class activities to a high standard.

3 Writing About Next Steps

Effective reports identify areas for improvement and provide achievable next steps.



Example:
To improve further, John should continue developing his problem-solving strategies and explain his reasoning in greater detail.

4 Writing Behaviour Comments Professionally

Focus on observable behaviours rather than personal opinions.



Instead of:
John is lazy.

Write:
John would benefit from completing class activities more consistently and remaining focused during independent work.

5 Using AI to Support Report Writing

AI can help improve grammar and clarity, but professional judgement remains essential.



Tips:

- Use AI to improve grammar and sentence structure.
- Always check for accuracy.
- Ensure comments are personal, professional, and evidence-based.

6 Building a Personal Comment Bank

Saving common report comments can improve consistency and reduce workload.



Ideas:

- Create folders for different learning areas.
- Save strong examples.
- Adapt comments to suit each student.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE REPORT WRITING

Be factual
Stick to what you know and can evidence.

Use professional language
Use clear, respectful, and positive language.

Focus on evidence
Use specific examples to support your comments.

Celebrate achievement
Recognise progress, effort, and success.

Identify next steps
Provide clear and achievable next steps.

Maintain a positive tone
Encourage and motivate students and whānau.

Navigating NCEA and the Moderation Process

Building confidence in assessment decisions

NCEA assessment involves making fair, consistent, and evidence-based decisions. Mentors can help new teachers understand assessment processes, moderation requirements, and professional judgement.

1 UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARD



KEY IDEAS

- Read the standard carefully.
- Understand the achievement criteria.
- Identify the evidence required.

2 UNDERSTANDING ACHIEVED, MERIT AND EXCELLENCE

ACHIEVED	MERIT	EXCELLENCE
• Basic understanding	• Clear understanding	• In-depth understanding
• Describes	• Explains	• Analyses in detail
• Some points	• Some analysis	• Evaluates critically



3 GATHERING VALID EVIDENCE



KEY IDEAS

- Use a range of assessment activities.
- Ensure work is authentic and meets requirements.
- Keep clear records of evidence.

4 INTERNAL MODERATION



KEY IDEAS

- Bring a range of student work.
- Compare judgements with colleagues.
- Discuss the evidence and reasons.
- Reach a shared and consistent decision.

5 GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK



KEY IDEAS

- Link feedback to the achievement criteria.
- Be specific and evidence-based.
- Provide clear next steps for improvement.

6 EXTERNAL MODERATION AND REFLECTION



KEY IDEAS

- Read the moderator's comments carefully.
- Reflect on your assessment decisions.
- Identify what to continue, adjust, or improve.
- Use this learning to strengthen future assessments.

Building Positive Relationships Through Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Practical Strategies for Every Classroom

Positive relationships are at the heart of effective teaching. By working in partnership with students and whānau, encouraging participation, and respecting culture and identity, we create classrooms where every student can succeed.

1 GREET STUDENTS AT THE DOOR



KEY IDEAS

- Smile and greet students by name.
- Make eye contact.
- Ask simple questions.
- Welcome every student.

EXAMPLE

"Ata mārie, Wiremu. How was your game last night?"

2 LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT EVERY STUDENT



KEY IDEAS

- Learn students' interests.
- Ask about sports, hobbies, family, and goals.
- Keep brief notes if needed.

EXAMPLE

"What did you enjoy most about your kapa haka practice?"

3 CONTACT HOME FOR POSITIVE REASONS



KEY IDEAS

- Send positive emails.
- Make positive phone calls.
- Celebrate success with whānau.

EXAMPLE

"I wanted to let you know that Aroha showed excellent leadership today."

4 USE STUDENTS' CULTURE AS A STRENGTH



KEY IDEAS

- Learn about students' cultures, languages, and identities.
- Include examples that connect to students' experiences.
- Encourage students to share their knowledge and perspectives.
- Use te reo Māori naturally and consistently.
- Celebrate cultural events and achievements.

EXAMPLE

"We are learning about rivers. How are rivers important in your culture or community?"

5 BE VISIBLE AND APPROACHABLE



KEY IDEAS

- Move around the room.
- Speak with students during activities.
- Notice effort and participation.

EXAMPLE

"I noticed you kept trying even when the task was challenging." Ka pai!"

6 CELEBRATE SMALL SUCCESSES



KEY IDEAS

- Recognise effort.
- Acknowledge improvement.
- Celebrate achievement publicly and privately.

EXAMPLE

"Your explanation today was much clearer than last week."

Using Te Reo Māori in Everyday Teaching

Small words. Big impact.

1 START WITH GREETINGS

Use simple greetings every day.



EXAMPLES

- Kia ora
- Ata mārie
- Tēnā koutou

2 USE SIMPLE CLASSROOM COMMANDS

Introduce one or two phrases at a time.



EXAMPLES

- Whakarongo mai (Listen)
- Noho iho (Sit down)
- E tū (Stand up)

Start small and use them consistently.

3 CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Recognise effort and achievement.



EXAMPLES

- Ka pai!
- Tino pai!
- Ka rawe!

4 WRITE THE DATE IN TE REO MĀORI

A simple daily routine.



MONTHS

- Kohitātea
- Hui-tanguru
- Poutū-te-rangi
- Paenga-whāwhā
- Haratua
- Pipiri
- Hōngongoi
- Here-turi-kōkā
- Mahuru
- Whiringa-ā-nuku
- Whiringa-ā-rangi
- Hakihea

5 USE STUDENTS' CULTURE AS A STRENGTH

Every student brings valuable experiences and knowledge.



6 PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION



REMEMBER

- Be willing to learn.
- Practise regularly.
- Learn alongside your students.

Every word of Te Reo Māori helps create a classroom where students feel seen, valued, and proud of who they are.

Building Teacher Capability with Technology

Using digital tools to support teaching, learning, and professional practice.

Technology should simplify teaching, save time, improve communication, and enhance student learning. Mentors can help new teachers build confidence by introducing practical tools that can be used every day.

1 ORGANISING TEACHING RESOURCES



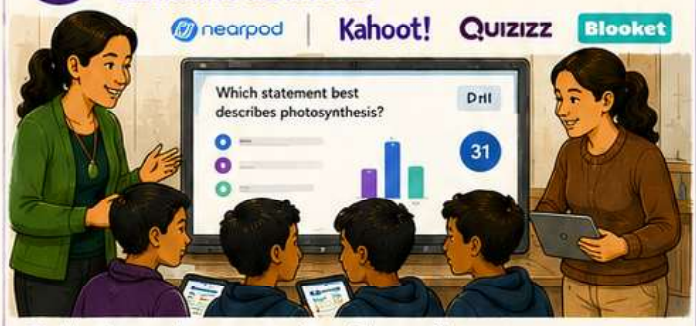
- Create folders by subject and topic.
- Store worksheets, presentations, and assessments.
- Use cloud storage for easy access anytime, anywhere.

2 USING AI TO SUPPORT PLANNING



- Generate lesson starters and ideas.
- Create quizzes, worksheets and activities.
- Improve report comments and emails.

3 CREATING ENGAGING LEARNING ACTIVITIES



- Use interactive presentations (Nearpod).
- Add polls, quizzes, drawing, and activities.
- Use retrieval quizzes and collaborative boards.

4 USING TECHNOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT



- Use Google Forms for quizzes and surveys.
- Analyse results to identify learning gaps.
- Track student progress over time.

5 CREATING TEACHING RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY



- Create presentations quickly (PowerPoint/Slides).
- Use Canva for worksheets, posters and visuals.
- Create instructional videos or screen recordings.

6 BUILDING DIGITAL CONFIDENCE



- Learn one new tool at a time.
- Watch short tutorial videos.
- Ask colleagues for support and practise regularly.

Navigating School Procedures and Expectations

Supporting new teachers to understand how their school operates

Every school has its own way of doing things.
Your mentor is here to help you understand local procedures, expectations, and where to go for support.

You don't need to know it all—just ask.

1 WHO DO I GO TO FOR HELP?



Key Ideas

- Know who to contact for different situations.
- Don't wait—ask early and seek support.
- We're all here to help you succeed.

2 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES



Key Ideas

- Understand school hours and professional expectations.
- Attend meetings and communicate regularly.
- Be aware of school events and commitments.
- Ask about parent communication and reporting.

3 TUTORIALS AND STUDENT SUPPORT



Key Ideas

- Clarify expectations for tutorials.
- Understand lunchtime, tutorial, and after-school support opportunities.
- Know how students access support services.
- Communicate scheduled times to students and whānau.

4 PLANNING AND PREPARATION



Key Ideas

- Discuss planning time during the school week.
- Clarify expectations for planning and preparation between terms.
- Understand expectations for assessment and resource development.
- Ask your mentor if you are unsure.

5 RELIEF TEACHING AND INTERNAL COVER



Key Ideas

- Discuss how relief and internal cover operate in this school.
- Clarify expectations when covering classes.
- Ask about access to teaching resources and classrooms.
- Clarify any local procedures related to relief teaching and internal cover.

6 ABSENCES AND RELIEF WORK



Key Ideas

- Know how to report an absence.
- Understand expectations for preparing relief work.
- Prepare clear, easy-to-follow plans.
- Leave work in an accessible location (office / shared drive / classroom folder).
- Communicate any changes as early as possible.

Understanding School Acronyms

Decoding the language of New Zealand schools

Acronyms are everywhere in schools.
Understanding them helps new teachers communicate confidently, participate in conversations, and feel part of the team.

1 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

HOD	Head of Department
TIC	Teacher in Charge
DP	Deputy Principal
AP	Assistant Principal
BOT	Board of Trustees
SLT	Senior Leadership Team



2 ASSESSMENT AND NCEA

NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
AS	Achievement Standard
US	Unit Standard
A / M / E	Achieved / Merit / Excellence
OTJ	Overall Teacher Judgment
R	Resubmission



3 STUDENT DATA AND SYSTEMS

KAMAR	Student Management System (KAMAR)
PAT	Progressive Achievement Test
e-asTTle	Assessment tool for Teaching and Learning
SMS	Student Management System
LMS	Learning Management System
MIS	Management Information System
IDP	Individual Development Plan
ERO	Education Review Office



4 STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
RTLB	Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour
LSC	Learning Support Coordinator
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
PB4L	Positive Behaviour for Learning
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ORS	Ongoing Resourcing Scheme
Whānau	Family / home group / support network



5 CURRICULUM AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

NZC	New Zealand Curriculum
PLD	Professional Learning and Development
CoL	Community of Learning
Kāhui Ako	Community of Learning Network
OTL	Online Teaching and Learning
L2P	Learning to Learn
TCS	The Curriculum Statements
GC	Graduate Competencies



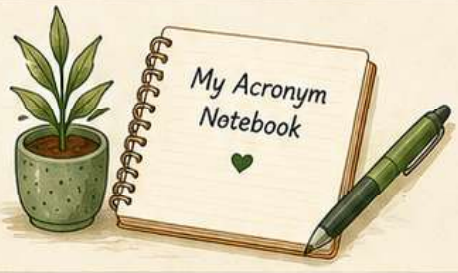
6 SCHOOL LIFE AND DAILY PRACTICE

PPTA	Post Primary Teachers' Association
EOTC	Education Outside the Classroom
PLC	Professional Learning Community
CACTUS	Coaching, Assessment, Collaboration, Tracking, Using Data, Successful
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PD	Professional Development
H&S	Health and Safety
OTJ	On-the-job (training)



MENTOR TIPS

- You don't need to learn them all at once.
- Keep a personal acronym notebook.
- Ask questions when you're unsure.
- Add new acronyms as you go.
- Every school has its own language.





STRUCTURING A LESSON

A lesson designed for learning

A well-structured lesson helps students build understanding, make connections, practise new learning and remember it for the long term.



1 DO NOW

This section helps students recall previous learning and activate prior knowledge.

Purpose: Strengthen memory retrieval and prepare students for new learning.



2 PRESENTING THE LEARNING INTENTION

This section helps students understand what they are learning and what success will look like. It provides a clear direction and purpose for the lesson.

Purpose: Clarify the learning goal and help students understand what they are expected to achieve.



3 QUESTION TIME

This section introduces the topic and stimulates curiosity. It also reinforces previous learning by asking students to make connections with prior knowledge.

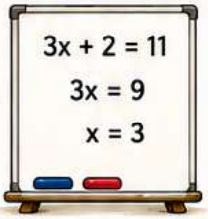
Purpose: Engage students, activate thinking, and connect previous learning to new concepts.



4 EXPLANATION

The teacher explicitly teaches new knowledge or skill in a clear and logical way. This includes explaining key ideas, using examples, modelling how to solve a problem (if needed), and thinking aloud to show the process.

Purpose: Build understanding by introducing new concepts through explicit instruction, modelling and clear explanations.



5 GUIDED PRACTICE

Students and the teacher work through an activity together. The teacher provides scaffolding, feedback, and support as students begin applying the new learning.

Purpose: Develop confidence and accuracy through supported practice and immediate feedback.



6 WORK INDEPENDENTLY

Students apply the new learning independently. This allows them to practise, problem-solve, and demonstrate their understanding.

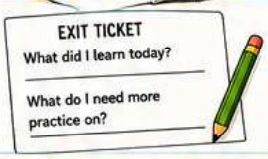
Purpose: Promote independence and help students consolidate learning through individual practice.



7 EXIT TICKET

Students reflect on what they have learned and identify areas requiring further support or practice.

Purpose: Check understanding, encourage reflection, and provide feedback to guide future teaching.



CONNECTING LESSON DESIGN TO THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Recalling information strengthens memory and improves long-term retention.

GOAL SETTING (METACOGNITION)

Clear learning goals help students focus attention and monitor progress.

CURIOSITY AND ELABORATION

Asking questions and making connections deepens understanding.

DUAL CODING AND EXPLANATION

Combining words, visuals and explanations helps students process and store information.

SOCIAL LEARNING AND FEEDBACK

Working together and receiving feedback strengthens understanding and accuracy.

PRACTICE AND AUTOMATION

Independent practice strengthens neural pathways and builds confidence.

REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Reflecting on learning helps the brain identify gaps and plan next steps.

Effective lessons are intentionally structured to support learning.