



# MAKING THE MOST OF MENTOR CONVERSATIONS

By: Julie Andrews

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## Transition

‘End of the year’ implies many things depending on the context or conversation. Of course, there is a keen focus on teaching your final classes, and happiness at the growth, confidence and success of your students. You may have holiday plans to consider, family events and definitely some rest and self-care. However, let us think about our students learning and growth. What are the school expectations of teachers and the data they have gathered and what mechanisms and timelines might be in place, and how can you complete the work asked of you?

Term 4 is an important time for student reporting. These are an indication of whole year progression across the learning areas. Much of your data gathering is accumulated into these reports. Some of this data may be required and useful, according to your school’s practices, to support the transition of students into their next year. Find out how and when your school will require the data and if there are handover meetings. Discuss these expectations with your mentor, as they will have had previous experience.

Data literacy is the ability to understand and work with data. It may involve the following aspects of data gathering and analysis:

- summative and formative data and tools to analyse
- the use of data to inform teaching and learning
- assessment strategies for diagnosis
- collaboration via Professional Learning teams/communities.

With your mentor, identify the relevant data sets that you are required to use for end of year evaluation and transition processes. For the purpose of your work for end of year reports and transition, summative analysis against the Victorian Curriculum achievement standards is a common and main focus.

In addition to the required reports, consider these questions:

- What else do you know about each student that will help in their smooth transition with a new teacher or teachers?
- Who experiences a learning difficulty; what adjustments have you found successful?
- Who is likely to have continuing aide support, (number of hours and support type)?
- Who has had a medical issue through the year that affected their learning?
- Have any of your students suffered a family crisis that might continue to affect their learning in the years to come?
- Are any students in Out of Home Care situations that require an Individual Education Plan?

There may be more situations and learning behaviours not covered in these ideas. Imagine how easily your students will begin their new year if their teachers know these unique characteristics and will be able to accommodate for them from the outset.

We have discussed your work leading up to the end of the year, managing data, and preparing for your students to move into their next learning experience, however, let's consider the human element in transition. How will you prepare the students emotionally to be ready for the new year? You may need to accommodate for special transition days on or off campus; celebration assemblies or events; identification of award recipients; class parties etc.

Now what about you? How are you preparing for your transition into the new year? Do you have to plan for a different grade or different subjects to teach? How are you going to collect data about next year's students? In a mentoring conversation, check that you have all that you need to plan appropriately and certainly celebrate your successes for this year.