

Reverse Mentoring

To shift traditional roles and empower mentees by inviting them to teach or lead their mentor in an area of knowledge, experience, or perspective they bring. This activity strengthens the mentee's confidence, reinforces the value of their voice and lived experience, and nurtures a culture of mutual learning. For mentors, it offers a powerful opportunity to model humility, curiosity, and respect for emerging voices in STEAM.

Process:

1. Introduce the Concept (5 minutes)

Explain that mentoring is a two-way street. While mentors offer guidance and experience, mentees bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and insights from their own lives, cultures, or interests. Reverse mentoring gives mentees the opportunity to take the lead and offer value back to the mentor.

2. Identify a Strength or Insight (10–15 mins)

Ask the mentee to think about something they know, use, or care about that they could introduce or teach to their mentor. Some examples include:

- A digital tool or platform (e.g., Canva, TikTok, Notion)
- A social or cultural issue they're passionate about
- A STEAM topic they're currently studying or exploring
- A creative skill like 3D modeling, coding, design, or storytelling
- A perspective on Gen Z values, media, or activism

Use prompts like:

- *"What's something you're good at or excited about that others often ask you about?"*
- *"What do you think your mentor might not know about yet?"*

3. Plan the Exchange (10–15 mins)

Together, plan how the mentee will share their topic. This could be:

- A short demo or tutorial
- A presentation or informal talk.
- A shared article or video and discussion
- A co-working session using a new tool

The mentor's role is to listen, ask questions, and reflect on what they're learning.

4. Run the Reverse Mentoring Session (15–30 mins)

Schedule time during the next session for the mentee to lead. Ensure they feel supported and prepared. Keep the tone informal and collaborative.

5. Reflect Together (10 mins)

After the session, reflect together:

- *Mentee: How did it feel to lead or teach? What did you learn about yourself?*
- *Mentor: What surprised you? What new perspective or skill did you gain?*

Top Tips:

1. Tailor to the Mentee's Readiness

Each mentee is at a different point in their confidence and career journey:

- For early-stage mentees, keep the Visual Career Roadmap light and exploratory.
- For more confident mentees, go deeper with the Skill Ladder or offer bolder Stretch Challenges.
- Choose a Reverse Mentoring topic that plays to their natural interests or strengths.

2. Create Psychological Safety First

Before beginning any activity, ensure the mentee feels safe, heard, and supported. Emphasise that there's no “right” answer or perfect outcome—these activities are about growth, not performance.

3. Model Vulnerability and Curiosity

Mentors can encourage participation by being open themselves:

- Share your own roadmap or past career detours.
- Reflect on your own “stretch” moments and what you learned.
- In Reverse Mentoring, show genuine interest and be an active learner.

4. Use Visuals and Templates

Don't be afraid to make it hands-on or visual. Use printed templates, whiteboards, or online tools like Jamboard or Canva. It makes the process feel fun and creative—not just another task

5. Revisit and Build On Each Activity

These aren't one-time exercises. Come back to:

- The Roadmap to check in on goals
- Stretch Challenges as part of ongoing development
- Reverse Mentoring as a way to shift power and grow new skills over time