

# Strategies for building your program manager/teacher relationship

As the two facilitators of the classroom session, it is crucial that the program coordinator and teacher are aligned and working collaboratively to drive mentee participation in the program. Below are helpful strategies to strengthen this unique relationship and maximize the effectiveness of class sessions with mentees.

## **Articulate goals for the class session.**

It is crucial that both you and the teacher are able to share your visions for an ideal iMentor class session. Don't be afraid to revisit this conversation as the year goes on. Situations can change within the classroom over time and this open communication can help make sure that you are effectively adjusting to the change.

## **Develop a plan of action with your teacher.**

Be explicit about what you will be responsible for and what the teacher will be responsible for follow-up. Check in with your teacher after the next class to see how they felt things went. Call out the actions that the teacher took this time that really helped. Ask them how you did.

## **Ask for critical feedback (and really mean it)!**

Your teacher knows their students better than you will and can be a great source of wisdom. Asking for feedback shows that you respect their experience and that you are dedicated to developing in your role and ultimately, committed to the success of this program.

## **Teachers are incredibly busy.**

Be respectful of this and remember that their role in the iMentor program is usually only one of the many duties that they are responsible for. Ask the teacher when a good time would be to speak about the program and how they communicate best. Do they prefer phone calls, text messages, emails, in person meetings? Create and share an agenda with the teacher before you actually meet so that their time can be used most effectively. If the teacher is slow in responding, follow up in class. Present your asks of the teacher in a clear way – "Can you help me with these 3 things in class this week?"

## **Don't be afraid to speak openly with your host teacher when challenges emerge.**

Oftentimes, the uncomfortable conversations with teachers and school admin are the ones that are most productive. You need to be assertive in asking for what you need for this program to be a success while still respecting the host teacher's aims and needs.

### **Brag about how great your teacher is!**

Talk about them to other teachers, school administrators and your own program staff. They should be recognized for their great contributions to iMentor and it can help strengthen your relationship.

### **Ask your manager or a fellow program manager to observe you in the classroom.**

This can be helpful to gain another's perspective about how the class flows and the roles that you and the teacher are playing.

### **If challenges persist with your teacher's role in the class session, different strategies might need to be implemented.**

Consider you or your manager having a conversation with your school admin contact to discuss how they can support the teacher to be a stronger influence in the iMentor class session and how this affects the effectiveness of the program in their school.

Have you tried any of the above strategies or one not included in the list? Leave the strategy and the results in the comments below.

---