Getting Started

Using visual strategies to support and guide the development of a positive sense of identity of students with intellectual disabilities

By Dolly Bhargava
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Acknowledgements

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Dolly Bhargava has developed this resource in collaboration with the teaching staff, students and families at Carson Street School and Leeming Education Support Centre. Dolly Bhargava is a speech pathologist with a Masters in Special Education. She works with children, adolescents and adults with a range of disabilities in a variety of settings such as family homes, childcare centres, preschools, schools, and corrective services. She provides consultancy and training services on a range of issues relating to communication, behaviour management, literacy, emotional literacy, vocation and social skills both nationally and internationally. She has authored a number of books and developed apps to extend knowledge and skills of people supporting individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit www.dollybhargava.com and www.behaviourzen.com

Suggested Reference

Introduction to the development of a positive sense of identity

Identity is a concept that one develops about themselves and is recognised by others over time. Developing a sense of one’s identity contributes to an understanding of who they are, their capacities, what shapes their interests, their value and meaning to others, and their own sense of growing into a positive and enjoyable future (Department of Education and Training, 2016; Vander Ven, 2008).

The process of identity development is not something that is fixed instead it is under constant construction. As we interact with people, engage in activities and learn from our experiences in everyday settings at home, school and in the community identity is continually being constructed, co-constructed and reconstructed (Göncü, 1999; Smailes & Street, 2011).

A positive sense of identity is linked to positive self-esteem (McCormack, 1997; Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995), internal locus of control (Bandura, 1982; Girdano & Everyly, 1986), self-regulated learning (Corno, 1992; Paris & Newman, 1990), high self-efficacy (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996; Zimmerman, 1989) and positive educational outcomes (Ainley, Batten, Collins & Withers, 1998; Day, 1994; and Yeung, 2003). Having a positive sense of identity is also aligned with belonging, the sense of feeling included and secure in the social settings (family, school and community) (Department of Education and Training, 2016).

Students with disabilities face a unique range of challenges that are associated with having a disability. If the student is in a setting where they are consistently experiencing prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and practices, low expectations and reduced opportunities a negative sense of identity can develop. These negative messages can make the student feel unworthy, inadequate, and ashamed. If not addressed it will lead to the student experiencing negative educational outcomes (Cole & Sapp, 1988; Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus & Seligman, 1986; and Cornwall & Soan, 2004). The long-term consequences for many of these students includes a lifetime of compromised social, economic, financial and personal wellbeing such as: poorer physical and mental health; higher mortality rates; lower wages and greater financial insecurity; increased instances of homelessness; drug and alcohol abuse and criminal activity (Burns et al., 2008; Chapman et al., 2002; Owens, 2004; Rumberger, 1987; Vinson, 2004).

Having a positive sense of identity doesn’t mean the student won’t experience hardship, sadness, or a sense of failure at times. It means that they will have a basis for coping with daily challenges and keeping things in perspective. For these reasons, as educators it is critical that we change the nature of what happens in our classrooms. By actively supporting our students with disabilities develop and maintain a positive sense of identity we can help them reach their full potential.
Components of identity

Our sense of identity is the result of the integration of various components. The components include:

- **Sense of self**
  Involve having a realistic view of one's abilities, needs and preferences in each of our different selves that together make us who we are.

- **Sense of competence**
  Involve being provided the opportunities to participate in activities to learn, extend and reflect on our skill development.

- **Sense of self-advocacy**
  Involve the "ability to stand up for oneself ...by speaking up, speaking out and speaking loud" (Pennell, 2001, p. 223).

- **Sense of connectedness**
  Involve having a sense of belonging i.e. the feeling of being valued, accepted and included in the social settings they are in.

- **Sense of purpose**
  Involve doing things that the individual believes is important and meaningful for themselves and others.

- **Sense of future**
  Involve feeling that one has some measure of control over the things that happen to them (Scales & Leffert, 1999) and a sense of growing into a positive and enjoyable future (Vander Ven, 2008).
Sense of Self
Strategies to support and guide development of positive sense of self

Involves having a realistic view of one’s abilities, needs and preferences in each of different selves that together make us who we are.

The figure below showcases the various selves that together makes us (the whole self) who we are.

To cultivate a positive sense of self it is important to:

1. Discuss the idea that the whole self is the sum total of our different selves.
2. Identify the various selves that are a part of us.
3. Acknowledge abilities in each of these selves.
4. Understand that nobody is perfect in each of the individual selves.
5. Recognise that it is the combination of the various selves that makes each of us unique.

On the following pages are examples of worksheets you could provide your student to help them identify their abilities, needs and interests in each of the selves.

Worksheet 1 – The different selves that make us

NB: you may discuss some or all of the different selves shown.
Worksheet 2 – For each of the selves encourage the student to identify their preferences and abilities.

**Sense of Self → Academic Self**

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their academic self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their academic self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of self</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of a subject.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a subject.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of prompting key**

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
- **VP Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- **VH Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- **PP Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Skill - Communicate like or dislike of a subject
Skill - Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a subject

I think it is easy
I think I am good at it
I think it is fun

I have done this before why do I need to do it again
I think it is hard
I think I am not good at it

I think it is boring
I do not know how to do it
I had difficulty the last time I did it

Other
Sense of Self → Social Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their social self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their social self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of self</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of a person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of an activity that involves other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a person/activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
- **VP Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- **VH Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- **PP Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Skill – Communicate like or dislike of a person

- Brother
- Sister
- Aunt
- Uncle
- Cousin
- Friend
- Mum
- Dad
- Grandparents
- Teacher
- Other
Skill – Communicate like or dislike of an activity that involves other people

- Going on a holiday
- Going for a drive
- Dancing
- Hanging out
- Having a BBQ
- Playing board games
- Picnic
- Ski resort
- Zoo
- Church
- Movies
- Concert
Beach

Park

Library

Camp

Cafe

Visiting places

Other
Skill - Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a person/ activity

Quiet
Friendly people
Helpful people
Funny people
Too many people
Too noisy
Too hot
Don’t know the people
Rude people
?
Other
Sense of Self ➔ Communicative Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their communicative self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their communicative self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Self</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative self</td>
<td>Identify the different methods they use to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the communication method.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key
Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

1  **Independent** - student can do things on their own

VP  **Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH  **Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP  **Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

FP  **Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Skill - Identify the different methods they use to communicate

- Talk
- Sign
- Pictures
- Communication device
- Body language
- Objects
- Braille
- Writing
- Facial expression
- Eye gaze
- Other
Skill - Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the communication method

- It takes a long time
- It is hard
- It makes me feel tired
- It looks different
- It is easy
- I don’t know how to do it
- Other
Sense of Self ➔ Independent Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their independent self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their independent self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of self</th>
<th>Age and achievement record (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent self</td>
<td>Identify activities they can do independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of doing the activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

I  Independent - student can do things on their own

VP  Verbal prompt - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH  Visual prompt - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP  Partial physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

FP  Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Skill - Identify activities they can do independently (home). Identify like / dislike of activity.
Skill - Identify activities they can do independently (home). Identify like / dislike of activity.

- Hang out swimming towel and bathers
- Sweep floor
- Strip bed
- Take bin outside/inside
- Carry shopping
- Make lunch
- Wash dishes
- Shower
- Use money
- Take medication
- Shave
- Brush teeth
- Use toilet
- Dress/Undress
- Brush hair
- Other
Skill - Identify activities they can do independently (school). Identify like / dislike of activity.

- Do my work
- Ask questions
- Hang out recess/lunch
- Catch school bus
- Line up
- Look after my things
- Take medication
- Use computer
- Get around
- Cross the road
- Use school canteen
- Use toilet
- Other
Skill - Identify activities they can do independently (community). Identify like / dislike of activity.

Go to shops
Use the bank
Ask for help
Visit the doctor
Pay at the counter
Use toilet
Use transport
Visit friends
Other
Skill - Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of doing the activity.

I don’t know how to do it

I am worried that I may make a mistake

It is too hard

I feel lazy

I like to be independent

I like to be helpful

I know I can do it

It is easy

It is fun

Other
Sense of Self ➔ Creative Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their creative self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their creative self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of self</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of a creative activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a creative activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of prompting key**

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
- **VP Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- **VH Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- **PP Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Travelling on transport  
Sports  
Writing  
Chess  
Electronics  
Video games  
Exercise  
Making things  
Gardening  
Music  
Reading  
Camping  
Drama  
Singing  
Other
It is boring

It is hard

It is easy

It is fun

?  Other
Sense of Self → Personality Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their personality self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their personality self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Self</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality self</td>
<td>Communicate their personal quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of a personal quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a personal quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

I  **Independent** - student can do things on their own

VP  **Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH  **Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP  **Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

FP  **Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Skill - Communicate their personal quality. Communicate like or dislike of a personal quality.

- Kind
- Honest
- Hard working
- Loving
- Helpful
- Smart
- Brave
- Strong
- Cool
- Fun to be with
- Don’t give up
- Talkative
- Friendly
- Helpful
- Happy
Skill - Communicate their personal quality. Communicate like or dislike of a personal quality.

Funny
Building things
Neat and tidy

Have good ideas
Flexible
Positive

Religious
Cultured
Aggressive

Rude
Bully
Shy

Other
Skill - Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a personal quality

I miss out on doing things

People are rude to me

I don't like myself

Other
Sense of Self → Physical Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their physical self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their physical self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Self</th>
<th>Age and achievement record (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical self</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of a physical activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical self</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of a physical activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Achievement Record Key**

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
- **VP Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- **VH Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- **PP Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Skill - Communicate like or dislike of a physical activity

Bike riding

Exercise

Golf

Cricket

Running

Basketball

Netball

AFL

Swimming

Karate

Soccer

Tennis

Other
Skill - Communicate reasons for like or dislike of a physical activity

- It is boring
- It is hard
- It is easy
- It is fun
- Other
Sense of Competence
Strategies to support and guide development of positive sense of competence

Involves being provided the opportunities to participate in activities to learn, extend and reflect on their skill development.

To cultivate a positive sense of competence in the context of daily routines, activities and interactions it is important to:

- Provide the student with the necessary supports so that they are set up for success (e.g. reduce distractions, schedules, choice boards, cue cards, mini schedules, activity checklists and rule charts).

- Provide the student with the opportunity to gradually increase the students level of participation in activities that they find challenging. For example, initially the student may engage in observer participation i.e. be physically present but does not actively partake in the activity → partial participation i.e. actively partakes in one or more tasks within the activity → complete participation i.e. actively partakes in the entire activity.

- Identify level of prompting required to teach a skill (e.g. most to least prompting hierarchy: full physical assistance → partial physical assistance → modelling → gesture → verbal → independent) and then systematically fade down to lower level prompts as your student masters the skill.

- Providing repeated practice of the skills before progressing onto the next skill.

- Provide the student with opportunity to reflect on what they are doing so that they attribute their competence to the results on their skills, effort and perseverance.

- Provide specific positive feedback on the student’s effort, improvement, level of participation and displays of confidence.

- Keep visual records tracking skill development and achievements for the student to reflect on.
Sense of Self Advocacy
Strategies to support and guide development of positive sense of self advocacy

Involves the "ability to stand up for oneself ...by speaking up, speaking out and speaking loud" (Pennell, 2001, p. 223).

Pennell (2001) defines self-advocacy as “...the ability to stand up for oneself .....by speaking up, speaking out and speaking loud” (p. 223) to express service needs, against personal discrimination and for personal rights (Hartman, 1993; Orr & Rogers, 2003). Self-advocacy is an important self-enabling skill through which empowerment, access to the environment and learning can become a reality.

Barriers that may prevent student with disabilities developing advocacy skills include limited communication skills, poor self-concept and limited social skills. Also, many students may have not been allowed to make decisions for themselves so don’t have the skills to make choices or decisions. Alternatively, some students don’t even see self-determination as an option and instead have learnt to comply without questioning. Shore (2005) states that the ramifications from failing to acquire sufficient self-advocacy skills can be very debilitating as they are crucial for enabling success in life. Hence, students with disabilities should be provided with specific instruction to develop and cultivate self-advocacy skills.

The worksheets on the following pages offer suggestions on how to help the student develop a knowledge of what they need to succeed. With this understanding you can then guide the student to advocate for themselves.
Sense of Self Advocacy → Academic Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student's ability to communicate the sense of their academic self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their academic self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Self-Advocacy</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education needs Recognize they need help to participate in class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education needs Ask help from appropriate person/s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education needs Ask for help in a timely manner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education needs Clearly communicate what help they need.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

I Independent - student can do things on their own

VP Verbal prompt - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH Visual prompt - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP Partial physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

FP Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
GETTING STARTED - BY DOLLY BHARGAVA

- Sensory breaks
- Angled worktop
- Pen/Pencil grips
- Adapted scissors
- Chunky crayons and markers
- Carrell desk
- Headphones, ear plugs
- Sun glasses
- Seating arrangement
- Large Print
- Print modifications
- Extra time
- Structured work
- Other
Time management skills

Simplifying complex directions

Organisational skills

Social skills

Assistive technology

Maths

English

Other
Sense of Self Advocacy → Social Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their social self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their social self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding needs</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social needs Understand that everyone needs help with learning how to get along with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social needs Explore the benefits of getting along with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social needs Classify their own behaviors that make it easier and harder to get along with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social needs Ask for help for improving their current behaviours in a timely manner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of prompting key**

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- I **Independent** - student can do things on their own
- VP **Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- VH **Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- PP **Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- FP **Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Personal space skills

Listening skills

Volume skills

Chatting skills

Looking skills

Conflict management skills

Emotional management skills

Apologising skills

Friendship skills

Group work skills

Greeting skills

Other
Sense of Self Advocacy → Communicative Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their communicative self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their communicative self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding needs</th>
<th>Age and achievement record (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication needs</td>
<td>Learn the importance of communicating with another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication needs</td>
<td>Recognize when they have difficulties with communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication needs</td>
<td>Ask for help when they do not understand from an appropriate person in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication needs</td>
<td>Ask for help when they have difficulty with expressing themselves from an appropriate person in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

I Independent - student can do things on their own

VP Verbal prompt - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH Visual prompt - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP Partial physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

FP Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
USING VISUAL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT AND GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE SENSE OF IDENTITY OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES
Sense of Self Advocacy → Independent Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their independent self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their independent self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding needs</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent needs</td>
<td>Understand the concept of doing things independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent needs</td>
<td>Recognize staff as being there to support them, not to do things for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent needs</td>
<td>To do as much as possible within an activity before asking for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent needs</td>
<td>Clearly communicate what they have attempted and the specific help they need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

I Independent - student can do things on their own

VP Verbal prompt - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH Visual prompt - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP Partial physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

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USING VISUAL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT AND GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE SENSE OF IDENTITY OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

- Schedule
- Checklist
- Rules
- Labelling environment
- Wheelchair
- Toileting
- Medication
- Relaxation
- Grooming
- Adapted cutlery
- Modifying food
- Canteen skills
- Travel training
- Thickened drinks
- Other
Sense of Self Advocacy → Creative Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their creative self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their creative self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding needs</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative needs</td>
<td>Clearly communicate their choice of creative activity they want to participate in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative needs</td>
<td>Understand the importance of engaging in creative activities within set time limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative needs</td>
<td>Ask for help from appropriate person/s on how to further develop their creative interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
- **VP Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- **VH Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- **PP Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Offer me choices

Schedule my choices

Teach me the steps

Encourage me

Other
Sense of Self Advocacy ➔ Personality Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their personality self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their personality self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding needs</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality needs</td>
<td>Understand that everyone needs help with improving some of their personal qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality needs</td>
<td>Explore the benefits of improving personal qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality needs</td>
<td>Clearly communicate the personal qualities they would like to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality needs</td>
<td>Ask for help from appropriate person/s on how to improve their personal qualities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

I  Independent - student can do things on their own

VP  Verbal prompt - student was helped by someone giving suggestions

VH  Visual prompt - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions

PP  Partial physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance

FP  Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Help me put together an 'About me Book'

Journal to learn about myself

Help me cope with my worries

Encourage me

Be assertive

Solve problems

Other
Sense of Self Advocacy → Social Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their physical self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their physical self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding needs</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical needs</td>
<td>Understand the importance of physical activity and nutrition to achieve a healthy lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical needs</td>
<td>Understand the impact of their decisions related to their physical activity and nutrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical needs</td>
<td>Make healthy physical activity and nutrition decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical needs</td>
<td>Ask for help with self-management skills in the context of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, managing stress and maintaining their self-esteem from an appropriate person/s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of prompting key**

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
- **VP Verbal prompt** - student was helped by someone giving suggestions
- **VH Visual prompt** - student was helped by someone using visual prompts such as gestures, pictures, signing or showing actions
- **PP Partial physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
Help me learn about healthy eating
Help me learn about healthy drinking
Help me learn about healthy exercise
Help me learn about healthy sleep
Offer me choices
Schedule my choices
Teach me the steps
Encourage me
Other
Sense of Connectedness
Strategies to support and guide development of positive sense of connectedness

Involves having a sense of belonging i.e. the feeling of being valued, accepted and included in social setting they are in.

Interactions with others influences how a student views themselves, how they interact with others now and in the future. It also sets up their expectations for successful interactions or rejections (Thompson & Virmani, 2010).

Teachers can play a significant role in influencing and shaping their student’s identity. According to Kostelnik et al. (2014) the five key elements that adults need to help the child foster positive judgements about themselves include:

- Warmth
- Acceptance
- Genuineness
- Empathy
- Respect

When teachers form positive bonds with students, classrooms become supportive spaces in which students can engage in academically and socially productive ways (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Positive teacher-student relationships are classified as having the presence of closeness, warmth, and positivity (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). While it is not possible to force the student into a relationship or a network, to cultivate a positive sense of connectedness it is possible to create opportunities for the student that encourages the development of such connections. As an educator you can guide the student to make and maintain these connections by setting up a Circle of Connections’. Circle of Connections is a support structure that aims to provide opportunities, support and encouragement to the student to make connections. It is made up of a group of students who are intentionally invited to come together in friendship to support the student with disability, so that their dreams of being connected have a better chance of becoming a reality. The students in this circle offer emotional and practical support in a planned way so that the student with disability can make changes in their life.

Once the students who would like to assist the student with disability have been identified (called ‘social helpers’), set a meeting time where you can begin the program. As a group discuss with all the invited students the importance of friendships and what it would be like not to have friends. Inform them you will be starting a program called Circle of Connections. This program will assist students who would like to make connections, but for a number of reasons are finding it difficult. Draw 3 concentric circles as shown on the next page to guide the discussion. Instead of circles you could use a different shape e.g. rectangle, square etc.
During the meeting, explore the social skills that the student needs to learn. The “social helpers” can be assigned responsibilities of assisting the student develop the social skills needed in different school location areas and networks. For example, all “social helpers” have to greet the student, be friendly and helpful to the student as appropriate throughout the day. Some “social helpers” can be then assigned to help the student specifically in the playground, whereas others can be responsible for helping the student in the cafeteria, and so on. The hope is that practice and repetition of the skills within context will help the student develop their social skills. Along with assisting the student, encourage the “social helpers” to think of ways in which they can become true friends.

It is important that the “social helpers” are provided support and given opportunities to talk. Initially, a weekly meeting needs to be organised so that they have the opportunity to talk about the good things that happened during the week and to discuss issues that may have arisen. Suggestions on how to deal with problems can be provided.

In conclusion, it is important to re-emphasise that the development of social competencies, peer relationships and being part of networks can’t be left to chance. ‘Rome wasn’t built in a day’. Similarly, to build a supportive ‘Circle of Connections’ will not happen overnight, but as educators we must do all in our power to promote connectedness.
Sense of Purpose
Strategies to support and guide development of positive sense of purpose

Involves doing things that the individual believes is important and meaningful for themselves and others.

To cultivate a positive sense of purpose we need to create opportunities for the student to engage in things that are important and meaningful to them by:

- Creating times when the student can engage in their special interest.
- Show genuine interest and engage with them in their special interest.
- Build learning opportunities around their interest.
- Provide them with opportunities to share their special interest with their peers.
- Involve their special interest into curricular activities.
- Find other people who have the same interests.
- Nason (2014)

To cultivate a positive sense of purpose we also need to create opportunities for the student to do things for others. When they have done things for others it is important to explicitly acknowledge and provide feedback on the difference they have made to others.

On the next page is an example of a journal that was used to help a student record all the positive things they did for other people and positive things other people did for them which helps to affirm a sense of purpose and happiness.
My Purpose Journal – What is something positive I did for others today?

My name is: ____________________________________ Today the date is ___________

Today I helped:
☐ Teacher ______________________________ (write name)
☐ Class mate ______________________________ (write name)
☐ Visitor ______________________________ (write name)
☐ Other ______________________________ (write name)

I helped them:
☐ In an activity by_________________________________________________________
☐ Do a job by ____________________________________________________________
☐ With their feelings by __________________________________________________
☐ Other ________________________________________________________________

How did I feel about helping?
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

What did the other person think about me helping them?
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
My Purpose Journal –
What is something positive that someone else did for me today?

My name is: ____________________________________ Today the date is ___________

Today I was helped by:

☐ Teacher ______________________________ (write name)
☐ Class mate ______________________________(write name)
☐ Visitor ______________________________(write name)
☐ Other ______________________________(write name)

They helped me:

☐ In an activity by________________________________________________________
☐ Do a job by __________________________________________________________
☐ With their feelings by __________________________________________________
☐ Other ________________________________________________________________

How did I feel about them helping me?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

What did the other person think about helping me?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
Sense of Future
Strategies to support and guide development of positive sense of future

Involves feeling that one has some measure of control over the things that happen to them (Scales & Leffert, 1999) and a sense of growing into a positive and enjoyable future (Vander Ven, 2008).

To cultivate a positive sense of future we need to guide our students to learn how to:

• Identify things they like and are interested in
• Use their likes and interests as guides for choice making, decision making and goal setting
• Focus on the positives in a situation
• Understanding differences and celebrating uniqueness
• Recognise they always have options
• Support the student to face challenges in a gradual manner so that they can build resilience
• Learn how to set goals to move towards the future of their choice.

On the next pages are worksheets that can be used to help students identify what they would like their future to look like and set goals accordingly.
What I would like my future to look like in terms of my...

Education Future
Social Future
Communication Future
Independent Future
Creative Future
Personality Future
Physical
Sense of Future ➔ Academic Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student's ability to communicate the sense of their academic self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their academic self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Future</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education future</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of each option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education future</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education future</td>
<td>Clearly communicate what option they want in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

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FP Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
What would I like my future to look like?

Education Future

- Complete high school
- University
- Traineeship
- Apprenticeship
- TAFE
- Other
Sense of Future → Communicative Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their communicative self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their communicative self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Future</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication future</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of each option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication future</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the option.</td>
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<td>Communication future</td>
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**FP** Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
What would I like my future to look like?

Communication Future

- Talk
- Sign
- Pictures
- Communication device
- Facial expression
- Body language
- Objects
- Braille
- Writing
- Eye gaze
- Other
Sense of Future ➔ Independent Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their independent self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their independent self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

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<th>Sense of Future</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent future</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of each option.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent future</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the option.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent future</td>
<td>Clearly communicate what option they want in the future.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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What would I like my future to look like?

Independent future - Work

- Hospitality
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Working with animals
- Office work
- Packaging
- Building and construction
- Health
- Working with children
- Mining
- Horticulture
- Artist
- Food industry
- Warehousing
- Other
What would I like my future to look like?

Independent future - Accommodation

Live in family home

Live with friends

House

Unit/Flat

Shared accommodation with people I don’t know

Other?
What would I like my future to look like?

Independent future - Community

- Using community services
- Being part of community events
- Being in community meetings
- Getting along with people in the community
- Other
What would I like my future to look like?

Independent future - Travel

Western Australia
Australia
Overseas

Cruise
Aeroplane
Train

Bus
Car
Campervan
Sense of Future → Social Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student’s ability to communicate the sense of their social self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their social self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Future</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social future</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of each option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social future</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social future</td>
<td>Clearly communicate what option they want in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of prompting key

Identifying level of prompting required to teach and assist the student to perform the skill (e.g. least to most prompting hierarchy)

- **I Independent** - student can do things on their own
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- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
What would I like my future to look like?

Social Future

- Dating
- Married
- Friends
- Children
- Part of my family
- Community

Other?
Sense of Future ➔ Personality Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student's ability to communicate the sense of their personality self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their personality self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Future</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality future</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of each option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality future</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality future</td>
<td>Clearly communicate what option they want in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- **FP Full physical prompt** - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
What would I like my future to look like?

**Personality Future**

- Kind
- Honest
- Hard working
- Loving
- Helpful
- Smart
- Brave
- Strong
- Cool
- Fun to be with
- Don't give up
- Talkative
- Friendly
- Helpful
- Happy
What would I like my future to look like?

Personality Future

Funny
Building things
Neat and tidy
Have good ideas
Flexible
Positive

Other?
Connection with language
Connection with religion
Connection with history
Connection with Totems and symbols
Connection with dancing
Connection with food
Connection with values
Connection with music
Connection with customs
Sense of Future ➔ Physical Self

The worksheets on the following pages provide examples of visuals that can be used to support, supplement or enhance the student's ability to communicate the sense of their physical self.

The table below lists the skills the student needs to perform to communicate the sense of their physical self. You can record their age and the level of prompting you have to provide to teach and assist the student to perform the skill.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Future</th>
<th>Age and level of prompting (refer to key)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical future</td>
<td>Communicate like or dislike of each option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical future</td>
<td>Communicate the reason/s for the like or dislike of the option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical future</td>
<td>Clearly communicate what option they want in the future.</td>
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</table>

Level of prompting key

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FP Full physical prompt - student was helped by someone who provided with some physical assistance
What would I like my future to look like?

Physical Future

- Eating healthy
- Drinking healthy
- Healthy exercise habits
- Healthy sleep habits
- Other?
Well done!! Now that you have thought about what you would like your future to look like. To help you make your future dreams come true you need to set goals. A goal helps you think about what you want and how to get it.
Construct a plan...how do I get there?

1. What is your goal?
Construct a plan...how do I get there?

2. When would you like to reach your goal?
Construct a plan...how do I get there?

3. Make your goal a SMART goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>SPECIFIC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MEASURABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>ACHIEVABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>RELEVANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>TIMELY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examine goals periodically...

4. What is working? What is not working?
Creating Smart Goals

**STEP 1**
Specific Goal
Be clear about what exactly you want

**STEP 2**
Measurable Goal
Think of how you will know if you have reached your goal or not

**STEP 3**
Achievable Goal
Think is your goal do-able

**STEP 4**
 Relevant Goal
Think is your goal going to help you reach your dream?

**STEP 5**
Timely Goal
Make a timeline so you know how much time you have to achieve your goal. Decide on a start and finish date.

---

GETTING STARTED - BY DOLLY BHARGAVA
Examine goals periodically...

5. What needs to change?
### Stay on track...

#### 6. What do I need to do stay motivated?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Success Recognition...

7. What are my successes?
Conclusion

A positive sense of identity is developed over a lifetime as we all experience the many highs and lows that are part of the journey through life. As educators our role is help our student understand who they are, accept their whole self and help them learn the skills they need so that they can feel more capable when faced with any of life’s many challenges.
References


Notes