

Transdisciplinary Teams

Definition: Transdisciplinary Teams

In the context of education—and particularly special education—a transdisciplinary team is a group of professionals from different disciplines who work collaboratively across traditional boundaries to deliver holistic and coordinated support for students with complex needs. Unlike multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary teams, transdisciplinary teams integrate knowledge and skills across professional roles, often with role release—meaning team members share responsibilities and may implement strategies across disciplines.

Key Features:

- Student-centred and goal-driven
- Shared decision-making and joint planning
- Cross-disciplinary role release, where educators and therapists may implement each other's strategies
- Collaborative assessment and planning
- Ongoing communication and reflective practice

Application in a Queensland Special School

The use of transdisciplinary teams aligns with Queensland's Inclusive Education Policy, Student with Disability Procedures, and the Collaborative Inquiry Cycle for teaching and learning.

Typical Team Composition:

- Classroom teacher
- Special education teacher
- Teacher aides
- Occupational therapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Physiotherapist
- Guidance officer or psychologist
- School nurse
- Social worker or wellbeing officer
- Parents/carers
- The student (where appropriate).

Ways of Working in Transdisciplinary Teams

1. Collaborative Goal Setting

- Co-develop Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP) or Individual Support Plans (ISP).
- Ensure all professionals contribute to student goals that address both academic and functional outcomes.
- Align plans with the Australian Curriculum (with adjustments) and EQ's P-12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework.

2. Integrated Service Delivery

- Therapists model strategies in the classroom so that teachers and aides can embed them in daily routines.
- Role release allows strategies (e.g., AAC use, fine motor activities) to be carried out by multiple team members.
- Minimise pull-out therapy; maximise in-class, real-time coaching and modelling.

3. Regular Team Meetings and Communication

- Weekly or fortnightly team check-ins to review student progress.
 - Use of shared documentation platforms (e.g., OneSchool, SharePoint, Google Docs) to track input from all disciplines.
 - Clear communication protocols to avoid duplication or gaps.
4. Family Engagement
- Families are viewed as equal partners in planning and decision-making.
 - Encourage consistent communication (e.g., communication books, parent-teacher meetings, case conferences).
 - Incorporate family goals and concerns into planning.
5. Professional Learning Communities
- Joint professional development on evidence-based practices (e.g., positive behaviour support, trauma-informed practices).
 - Reflective practice cycles (plan–act–reflect–revise) involving all disciplines.
6. Flexible Team Structures
- Use of key worker models for students with high complexity, where one team member (e.g., speech therapist) leads coordination.
 - Dynamic groupings based on student need, classroom context, or specific goals (e.g., feeding, toileting, AAC access).

Supporting Frameworks and Resources in Queensland

- Inclusive Education Policy Statement (Department of Education QLD)
- Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework
- Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) on School Students with Disability
- OneSchool system for documentation and planning
- Collaborative Planning Processes supported by regional therapy teams and the State Schools Disability Inclusion team

Transdisciplinary Team Planning Template

Section 1: Student Information

Student Name:

Date of Birth:

Year Level/Class:

Case Manager:

Key Communication Method(s):

Priority Learning & Support Areas:

Section 2: Team Members and Roles

Name	Role	Contact Info	Role in Team	Notes
	Teacher		Instruction, planning, classroom data	
	Speech Pathologist		AAC, receptive/expressive language	
	Occupational Therapist		Sensory integration, fine motor skills	
	Physiotherapist		Gross motor, mobility, postural needs	
	Teacher Aide		Daily implementation, student support	
	Parent/Carer		Contextual insights, goal collaboration	
	Other			

Section 3: Shared Goals (from ICP or ISP)

Goal	Discipline Contributions	Role Release Notes	Review Date
e.g., Increase communication through AAC	SLP models use; Teacher embeds in lessons	TA supports used during transitions	Week 6

Goal	Discipline Contributions	Role Release Notes	Review Date
------	--------------------------	--------------------	-------------

Section 4: Strategies for Implementation

Daily Routine Supports (e.g., visuals, prompts):

Therapy Integration into Curriculum:

Behaviour Support/Wellbeing Strategies:

Data Collection Methods and Roles:

Section 5: Meeting Schedule and Communication Plan

Frequency of Team Meetings (e.g., weekly, fortnightly):

Agreed Platforms (e.g., OneSchool, Google Drive, email updates):

Team Communication Lead:

Date of Next Review:

Section 6: Reflection & Adjustments

What's working well?

What needs to change?

Adjustments made:

Parental Feedback Summary: