

Module 9: Exploring Our Beliefs About Mentoring

Time: 30 minutes

Materials Needed: 1. The Mentor Teacher Beliefs Inventory and Scoring Key
2. Three Approaches to Mentoring Interpretation

Media Needed: 1. Slides for Module 9

Objectives: Participants will be able to


1. Explain their personal beliefs about mentoring as revealed by The Mentor Teacher Beliefs Inventory
 2. Reflect on the extent to which they believe their scores on The Mentor Teacher Beliefs Inventory are personally valid
 3. Reflect on those parts of their personal biography that may influence their current dispositions toward mentoring practice
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Training Sequence:

1. Facilitator, using slides, explains that the goal of this module is to help participants gain insight into their personal beliefs about the mentoring process.
2. Facilitator, using slides, describes the nature of the inventory as a “forced-choice” instrument that is not based on “right” or “wrong” answers.
3. Facilitator instructs participants to take and self-score The Mentor Teacher Beliefs Inventory.
4. Participants take and score the inventory.
5. Facilitator refers participants to the Three Approaches Overview and invites participants to engage in self-reflection and small-group discussion.

Module 9: Exploring our Beliefs About Mentoring

Module 9



**Exploring Our Beliefs
About Mentoring**

The next four modules will focus on the importance of adapting mentoring behaviors to the needs of the beginning teacher. In Module 9, we begin our exploration of this important topic by taking an inventory designed to help us better understand our current beliefs about mentoring and the mentoring process.

**Qualities of the
High-Performance Mentor Teacher**

Commits to the Roles and Responsibilities of Mentoring	Serves as an Instructional Coach
Accepts the Beginning Teacher as a Developing Person and Professional	Models a Commitment to Personal and Professional Growth
Reflects on Interpersonal Communications and Decisions	Communicates Hope and Optimism for the Future

As we shift our focus to the mentoring process, we will begin to explore the need for mentors to be reflective interpersonal communicators and decision makers. This module is the beginning of that exploration.

Background

The inventory you are about to take has been designed to help you better understand the basic beliefs you hold about mentoring and how those beliefs might influence your mentoring behaviors.

As we know, our daily actions as classroom teachers are profoundly influenced by the beliefs we hold about the students we teach and about the teaching and learning process. In a very similar way, our actions as mentors are influenced by the beliefs we hold about beginning teachers and the mentoring process.

Module 9: Exploring our Beliefs About Mentoring

Background (continued)

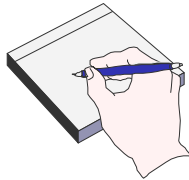
The inventory was adapted from the *Supervisor's Beliefs Inventory* developed by Carl Glickman (1985). It is a forced-choice instrument with no right or wrong answers.

You may want to point out that there is a great deal that mentors can learn by studying the theory and practice of supervision. Remind participants that supervision does not necessarily imply evaluation. You may want to briefly query the audience as to whether anyone has studied supervision at the graduate level, perhaps in a program to prepare school administrators.

Instructions

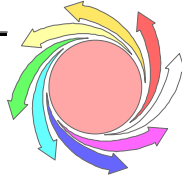
Take and self-score The Mentor Teacher Beliefs Inventory that begins on page 52 in your notebook.

Time: 15 minutes



Be clear that this is a *forced-choice* inventory, and the participants should choose the responses that they are most comfortable with, even if they do not fully agree. Also be clear that there are no *right or wrong* answers. The goal is self-understanding.

When you finish scoring the inventory, feel free to compare scores within your group. Remember: There are no right or wrong answers or good or bad scores.



Instruct participants to self-score the inventory when they are finished. Invite them to help each other figure out how to score the inventory, and acknowledge that they may want to share a calculator if someone in the group has one. Also, let them know that once everyone in the group has finished, they can begin comparing and discussing their scores. An overview of the three approaches follows the score sheet.

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The Mentoring Beliefs Inventory

Nondirective	Collaborative	Directive
2.3	2.2	2.1

Source: *Developmental Supervision* by Carl Glickman, 1985.

Carefully monitor the groups, as individuals vary in how quickly they are able to complete and score the inventory. If you sense that many people are finished and a few are still scoring, encourage those who are finished to reflect on whether they feel their scores are *personally valid* in light of the description provided on the Three Approaches to Mentoring Interpretation on page 56 of their notebooks. Assure participants that their scores will make more sense after they are explained in the next module.

The Mentor Teacher Beliefs Inventory

This inventory is designed for mentor teachers to assess their own beliefs about mentoring and professional development. The inventory assumes that mentor teachers believe and act according to three theoretical orientations to mentoring, but that one usually dominates. The inventory is designed to be self-administered and self-scored. Mentor teachers are asked to choose one of two options. A scoring key follows.

Instructions: Circle either A or B for each item. You may not completely agree with either choice, but choose the one that is closest to how you feel.

1. A. Mentor teachers should give beginning teachers a large degree of autonomy and initiative within broadly defined limits.
B. Mentor teachers should give beginning teachers directions about methods that will help them improve their teaching.
2. A. It is important for beginning teachers to set their own goals and objectives for professional growth.
B. It is important for mentor teachers to help beginning teachers reconcile their personalities and teaching styles with the philosophy and direction of the school.
3. A. Beginning teachers are likely to feel uncomfortable and anxious if their mentors do not tell them what they will be focusing on during classroom observations.
B. Classroom observations of beginning teachers are meaningless if beginning teachers are not able to define with their mentor teachers the focus or foci of the observation.
4. A. An open, trusting, warm, and personal relationship with beginning teachers is the most important ingredient in mentoring beginning teachers.
B. A mentor teacher who is too personal with beginning teachers risks being less effective and less respected than a mentor who keeps a certain degree of professional distance from beginning teachers.
5. A. My role during mentoring conferences is to make the interaction positive, to share realistic information, and to help beginning teachers plan their own solutions to problems.
B. The methods and strategies I use with beginning teachers in a conference are aimed at our reaching agreement over the needs for future improvement.

6. In the initial phase of working with a beginning teacher:
 - A. I develop objectives with the teacher(s) that will help accomplish school goals.
 - B. I try to identify the talents and goals of individual beginning teachers so they can work on their own improvement.

7. When several beginning teachers have a similar classroom problem, I prefer to:
 - A. Have the beginning teachers form an ad hoc group to help them work together to solve the problem.
 - B. Help beginning teachers on an individual basis find their strengths, abilities, and resources so that each one finds his or her own solution to the problem.

8. The most important clue that an entry-year workshop is needed occurs when:
 - A. The mentor perceives that several beginning teachers lack knowledge or skill in a specific area, which is resulting in low morale, undue stress, and less effective teaching.
 - B. Several beginning teachers perceive the need to strengthen their abilities in the same instructional area.

9.
 - A. Practicing mentors should decide the objectives of any entry-year workshops since they have a broad perspective on beginning teachers' abilities and the school's needs.
 - B. Mentor teachers and beginning teachers should reach consensus about the objectives of any entry-year workshop.

10.
 - A. Beginning teachers who feel they are growing personally will be more effective than beginning teachers who are not experiencing personal growth.
 - B. Beginning teachers should employ teaching methods that have proven successful over the years.

11. When I observe a beginning teacher scolding a student unnecessarily:
 - A. I explain, during a postobservation conference with the teacher, why the scolding was excessive.
 - B. I ask the teacher about the incident, but do not interject my judgments.

12.
 - A. One effective way to improve beginning teacher performance is for mentors to formulate clear professional improvement plans for beginning teachers.
 - B. Professional improvement plans are helpful to some beginning teachers but stifling to others.

13. During a preobservation conference:
 - A. I suggest to the teacher what I could observe, but I let the teacher make the final decision about the objectives and methods of observation.
 - B. The teacher and I mutually decide the objectives and methods of observation.

14.
 - A. Improvement occurs very slowly if beginning teachers are left on their own, but when a group of beginning teachers and their mentors work together on a specific problem, they learn rapidly and their morale remains high.
 - B. Group activities may be enjoyable, but I find that providing individual guidance to a beginning teacher leads to more sustained results.

15. When an entry-year program meeting is scheduled:
 - A. All mentor teachers who participated in the decision to hold the meeting should be expected to attend it.
 - B. Mentor teachers, regardless of their role in calling for or planning the meeting, should be able to decide if the workshop is relevant to their personal or professional growth and, if not, should not be expected to attend.

Scoring Key

Step 1. Circle your answers to the inventory in the following columns:

<i>Column I</i>	<i>Column II</i>	<i>Column III</i>
1B	1A	
	2B	2A
3A	3B	
4B		4A
	5B	5A
6A		6B
	7A	7B
8A		8B
9A	9B	
10B		10A
11A		11B
12A	12B	
	13B	13A
14B	14A	
	15A	15B

Step 2. Tally the number of circled items in each column and multiply by 6.7.

2.1 Total response in column I _____ x 6.7 = _____

2.2 Total response in column II _____ x 6.7 = _____

2.3 Total response in column III _____ x 6.7 = _____

Step 3. Interpretation: Refer to the Three Approaches to Mentoring worksheet on the following page to gain insight into your scores.

Source: Adapted from Glickman (1985), pp. 81-84.

Three Approaches to Mentoring

Interpretation

Instructions: The following brief descriptions of the three approaches to mentoring provide a general overview of each approach. After reading each description, reflect on your scores in terms of whether you believe they are personally valid.

2.1 Directive Approach. The product you obtained in Step 2.1 is an approximate percentage of how often you are likely to take a *directive approach* to mentoring rather than the other two approaches.

Mentor teachers with high directive scores may tend to believe that beginning teachers are best supported when their mentors provide professional direction that is grounded in their veteran knowledge and experience. Consequently, such mentors may feel most comfortable when providing strategic or technical advice.

2.2 Collaborative Approach. The product you obtained in Step 2.2 is an approximation of how likely you are to take a *collaborative approach* to mentoring rather than the other two approaches.

Mentor teachers who take a predominantly collaborative approach to the mentoring process may tend to believe that beginning teachers benefit most when their mentors relate to them as professional peers. Consequently, such mentors may feel most comfortable when engaged in collegial dialogue or collaborative problem solving.

2.3 Nondirective Approach. The product you obtained in Step 2.3 is an approximation of the degree to which you are likely to employ a nondirective approach to mentoring.

Mentor teachers who prefer a nondirective style of mentoring may tend to believe that beginning teachers profit most when their mentors provide them with the professional autonomy to find their own way and solve their own problems. Such mentors may feel most comfortable when listening to or encouraging beginning teachers as they seek their own solutions to professional dilemmas.