

Second Edition

Mentoring Matters:

*A Practical Guide to
Learning-focused
Relationships*

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Study Guide



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A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships (Second Edition)
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About this Guide:

This Study Guide offers a structured journey through the concepts and strategies presented in *Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships*. This Guide will support mentor teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators who are interested in extending their knowledge, skills and strategies for developing productive learning-focused relationships. We encourage facilitators to tailor questions to match the needs and interests of their specific groups. We offer a selection of possibilities in each section of this Guide to model some of these options.

This Study Guide is divided into five sections or study areas. There is flexibility in each area to provide opportunities for individual and group study. The “Do” and “Apply” sections in each study area can be done either within a session or between sessions. The questions in each of the sections may be used for group discussion or for personal journal entries.

The amount of time allotted for each section is dependent on each study group and the intended purpose for this Guide. The sessions are designed to be somewhat contiguous. We recommend that you complete them in the order they are presented. Most sessions can be completed within thirty to sixty minutes.

Suggested format for a thirty minute study:

Prior to the Session:

- Respond to the questions in the *Activating & Engaging* Phase.

- Read the assigned section in *Mentoring Matters* that is designated in the *Exploring & Discovering* Phase.

During the Session:

- Respond to the questions as a group discussion in the *Exploring & Discovering* Phase.

Following the Session:

- Complete the “Do” and “Apply” in the *Exploring & Discovering* Phase.
- Respond to the questions in the *Organizing & Integrating* Phase in a personal journal entry.

Suggested format for a sixty minute study:

During the Session:

- Respond to the questions as a group discussion in the *Activating & Engaging* Phase.
- Respond to the questions as a group discussion in the *Exploring & Discovering* Phase.
- Read the assigned section in the *Exploring & Discovering* Phase.
- Complete the “Do” and “Apply” in the *Exploring & Discovering* Phase.
- Respond to the questions as a group discussion in the *Organizing & Integrating* Phase.

In both suggested time formats allow a period at the beginning of each session for participants to share notes, artifacts, and reflections of applications from earlier study.

SECTION ONE: LEARNING-FOCUSED RELATIONSHIPS

Focus:

- Identity as a Growth Agent
- Elements of a Learning-focused Relationship
- Understanding the First Year Teacher

Activating & Engaging

How would you describe a learning-focused relationship? Consider critical attributes, intentions and behaviors.

Exploring & Discovering

Think About:

Think about an existing professional relationship in which it is your intention to produce growth.

- What are some goals and outcomes for your colleague?
- What are some goals and outcomes for the relationship?
- What are some strategies you are presently using that support your goals and outcomes?
- What are some challenges and barriers to achieving your goals and outcomes?

Read:

Section One: The Mentor's Role – pages 1-11

Do:

- Review your description of a learning-focused relationship.
 - What are some new ways you're thinking about learning-focused relationships?
 - What might you add to your description?
- Craft a definition of a learning-focused relationship that you would share with others.

Apply:

In Section One, find the Calendar of Options (pages 13-17).

- Choose one (or more) strategies you will apply. (NOTE: Consider time of year, nature of your present relationships and your goals and outcomes).
- Collect notes and artifacts on the results of your implementation and bring to Session Two.

Organizing & Integrating

What are you learning about yourself as a growth agent?

Where else might you apply your new understandings of a learning-focused relationship?

SECTION TWO: LEARNING-FOCUSED INTERACTIONS: A CONTINUUM

Focus:

- Dimensions of Attention
- A Continuum of Learning-Focused Interaction
- The Third Point: Sources and Applications

Activating & Engaging

Think of occasions when you've received advice from others with whom you work. When has this been a positive experience? When has it not been useful?

Under what circumstances do you offer advice or solutions to others about their problem/issues/concerns?

Exploring & Discovering

When your intention is to support growth and learning, what are some things to which you pay attention to determine your success?

Read:

Section Two: Learning-Focused Interactions – pages 19-33

What are some strategies which you are currently using for developing problem solving and decision making skills in others?

What cues do you typically notice in others that indicate it may be necessary to shift stances?

Do:

- Create three scenarios based on your experiences as a growth agent:
 - one in which you have (or would) consult;
 - one in which you have (or would) collaborate;
 - one in which you have (or would) coach; or
- Create one scenario based on your experience as a growth agent and explore it from each of the three stances (consult, collaborate, coach).

Apply:

- Identify several colleagues with whom you have regular interactions. Practice flexibility in stance, paying particular attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues that indicate which stance might be most appropriate.
- Choose specific strategies for each stance and apply them during your interactions with others.
- Keep a journal of your findings.

Organizing & Integrating

What are some patterns you are noticing about verbal and non-verbal cues (yours and your colleagues)?

How might you apply your observations to navigating the Continuum of Learning-Focused Interaction?

What are some generalizations you can make about the stances across the continuum and developing colleagues' capacities?

What are some specific connections between the application of the Continuum of Learning-Focused Interaction and your work?

SECTION THREE: MAXIMIZING TIME AND ATTENTION

Focus:

- Attending Fully
- Structured Conversations
- Balancing Support with Challenge

Activating & Engaging

Think of a time when you felt someone was truly listening to you? What indicated that you had their full attention? Describe specific, observable behaviors.

Exploring & Discovering

What are some times when it is (was) important for you to pay full attention to someone else?

What are some strategies you use to focus your own attention?

Read:

Section 3: Maximizing Time and Attention – pages 35-47.

Do:

- Practice attending fully for 10 minutes each day. Notice what happens for you and those to whom you attend.
- Review the structured conversation templates on pages 42-43.
- Choose several questions to incorporate into your learning-focused conversations. Pay attention to the results of your questions.
- Identify questions which appeared most productive for your colleagues.

Apply:

- Choose one (or more) of the structured protocols on pages 45-47 to apply.
- Collect notes and artifacts on the result of your implementation and bring to Session Four.

Organizing & Integrating

What are you noticing about the influence of attending fully on your interactions with others?

SECTION FOUR: LEARNING-FOCUSED VERBAL TOOLS

Focus:

- Inviting Thinking
- Sending and Receiving Non-verbal Messages
- Developing Linguistic Skillfulness

Activating & Engaging

Think of an existing professional relationship that supports and challenges your thinking?

What are some specific contributing factors (physical, emotional and intellectual)?

Exploring & Discovering

How does one invite thinking?

What verbal and non-verbal choices create conditions for thoughtfulness?

Read:

Section Four: Learning-Focused Verbal Tools – pages 49-63

Do:

- Practice and automatize the patterns of inviting thinking on page 52.
- Complete the exercises on positive presuppositions on page 53.
- Complete the exercises on paraphrasing on page 57.
- Complete the exercise on probing for specificity on page 62.

Apply:

Bring reflections regarding your use of the learning-focused toolkit to Session Five.

Organizing & Integrating

What are some discoveries you're making about the influence of your verbal and non-verbal choices on your learning-focused relationships?

What are you learning about yourself that will support / impede your practice?

What learning strategies will you employ to increase your skillfulness?

SECTION FIVE: FACILITATING PROFESSIONAL VISION: FROM NOVICE TO EXPERT TEACHING

Focus:

- Defining Expertise
- Identifying Stages of Development
- Developing Professional Capacities

Activating & Engaging

Think about your first year of teaching. What were some of your challenges? What were some of your successes?

When you think of a novice what characteristics come to mind?

How would you describe an expert?

Exploring & Discovering

As teachers move from novice to expert what are some actions that support this development?

Read:

Section Five: Facilitating Professional Vision: From Novice to Expert Teaching – pages 65-79.

Do:

- Think of some examples of current instructional initiatives in your setting.
 - Apply the four lenses of professional capacities to these examples.
 - Note which areas appear to be most developed and which areas appear to be least developed.
- Review *Section 6: Strategies for Success* – pages 81-98.
 - Select one or more strategies you will apply.
 - Collect notes and artifacts on the results of your implementation.

Apply:

- In *Section 7: Appendix* review the self-assessment rubrics on pages 100-105.
- Complete the Primary Trait Rubric on pages 102-105.
- Establish a learning goal based on the results of the self-assessment.

Organizing & Integrating

What are you noticing about your expertise as a mentor?

What are some new connections you are making about your own professional capacities?