

December 1996

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Recommended Citation

Silverberg, Susan B.; Betts, Sherry C.; Huebner, Angela J.; and Cota-Robles, Sonia (1996) "Implicit Beliefs About Change: A Theory-Grounded Measure Applied to Community Organizations Serving Children, Youth, and Families," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 23: Iss. 4, Article 5.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.2377>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol23/iss4/5>

Implicit Beliefs About Change: A Theory-Grounded Measure Applied to Community Organizations Serving Children, Youth, and Families

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The aim of this study was to design and evaluate a theory-grounded measure that taps staff beliefs about the possibility for change in an organization which serves children, youth and families at the community level. The rationale for measuring staff beliefs about change derived from a motivation theory that features two contrasting beliefs structures (entity vs. incremental), and the goals and behavioral dispositions associated with each (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Twenty-nine individuals associated with the community-based organization completed the newly developed Implicit Beliefs About Change Scale (IBACS) and participated in a semi-structured interview. Quantitative analyses indicated that the IBACS has good internal consistency, and yields sufficient response variance. Content analysis of the semi-structured interviews, used to assess the scale's construct validity, uncovered distinctive and theory-consistent behavioral dispositions among those staff members whose beliefs regarding change could be characterized as either incremental or entity in nature. Implications for staff development and future research are discussed.

All organizations—including those whose goal is to promote the well-being, skills, and resources of communities, families, and youth—face the challenge of staff development and the larger challenge of organizational- or systems-level change. The potential for success in both staff development and organizational-level change is clearly dependent on a myriad of interacting supportive and restraining factors (Wyant & Bell, 1981; Peterman, 1991). The origins of these factors may be external to the organization

(e.g., existing governmental policy and funding opportunities) or deeply embedded within it (e.g., level of rapport between staff members and their supervisors). Staff development and even organizational-level change, however, require that *individuals* change behavior and that *individuals* come to accept new policies or techniques (Hord, 1979; Peterson, 1991; Stewart, 1989). Thus, personal attitudes toward change and personal beliefs about the possibility for change and growth would seem to be critical factors in determining the success of any attempts at staff or organizational development.

Nonetheless, scholars generally fail to recognize individuals' beliefs about and attitudes toward change as potential assets or stumbling blocks to successful staff development and organizational change. Indeed, the effect of beliefs about and attitudes toward change on the initiation, and success, of professional and organizational development has not been a common topic of research (see Jacobsen & Drier, 1973 for an exception). This is a notable limitation, because these beliefs and attitudes are likely to affect not only motivation, but also willingness to take on challenges and embrace new techniques.

The link between attitudes toward change and the success of staff development strikes an intuitive chord. One can assume, for example, that the staff member who anticipates or expects to benefit from change will likely be more motivated to learn than another participant who feels neutral, apathetic, or fearful toward change. Motivation and engagement are also likely to vary as a function of beliefs about the possibility for change (i.e., level of optimism regarding the malleability of a situation or the self). Although these links are intuitively appealing, it is important to recognize that attitudes toward and beliefs about change may be complex in origin—reflecting the individual's sense of his or her own capacity to change and grow and/or his or her sense of the organization's ability to change and be flexible (see Flanagan, 1983; McGettigan, 1985).

Although the effects of personal attitudes toward and beliefs about change on the success of staff and organizational development have received little empirical investigation, researchers in the field of education have made some inroads in the measurement of attitudes toward professional development itself and

toward particular staff development programs (e.g., Aist, 1987; Amos & Benton, 1988; Flanagan & Trueblood, 1983; Richardson & Benton, 1990). The measures, however, are still in the early stages of development (Richardson & Benton, 1990). A field in which individual attitudes toward change are especially acknowledged is computer training. In this field, trainers are confronted not simply by apathy toward change but often by actual fear of the technology—"computer anxiety." The fact that several articles in the field of professional development address this issue provides evidence of the impact individual attitudes can have on behavior (e.g., Albritton & Sievert, 1984; Gressard & Loyd, 1985; Standish, 1993). Despite this recognition, it is still not clear how general attitudes toward and beliefs about change and development play into the success of professional and organizational development. Initiating research to address this issue requires a means of measuring these attitudes and beliefs.

As part of a larger project, the present study's aim was to design a theory-grounded measure to tap beliefs about the possibility for change in an organization which serves children, youth and families at the community level. The field of achievement motivation provides a theory that served as the basis for the measure. The organization which served as the setting for this study is described below, followed by a detailed explanation of the original theory and its application to the project.

The Organization in Context

The organization in this study has a long history of working with youth and families in the community context. Community/youth/family educators (CYFEs) work at the grassroots level to identify local needs, and then design and deliver research-based education programs to address those needs. Each CYFE has access to research findings and the broader literature through a public university, including university-based faculty assigned to work in conjunction with and as a resource to the CYFEs. Historically, this organization taught home living skills, often in the rural areas, including food preservation, clothing construction, family economics, and child rearing.

Over the last several years, many administrators and funders of youth- and family-serving organizations have begun to

focus their programs on youth and families at risk. Indeed, the multitude of societal problems such as domestic violence, gangs, teen pregnancy, and delinquency has created a demand in all organizations to develop effective prevention and intervention programs for at-risk groups. This demand is certainly evident in the organization that served as the setting for the present research; in recent years not only the administrators and funders, but also many of the CYFEs have identified the need to move beyond home living skills and focus on more pressing issues in family life. Programs that are now encouraged and supported include training parent aides to conduct educational home visits to families involved with Child Protective Services; mobilizing communities for the creation of school-age child care with parent education components and training for the child care providers; working with schools to train peer mediators; and other programs carried out in collaboration with allied agencies.

This change in focus has created a need for new skills and changed attitudes among the CYFEs, their administrators, university partners, and community advisory boards. The need for new skills and changed attitudes is not unique to this organization. Moreover, as in most organizations, change is occurring gradually; the change in program audiences and focus has not been completed. People at all levels of the organization are at various points along a change continuum which ranges from entrenched in the old way of doing business to pushing the system into the future. Questions regarding the front line workers' (CYFEs') beliefs about the possibility for change in the organization emerged from staff development planning efforts.

Social-Cognitive Theory of Motivation: Beliefs-Goals-Behavior

Carol Dweck and her colleagues offer a social-cognitive theory of motivation that provides a useful foundation for the measurement of beliefs about change (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Henderson & Dweck, 1990). The theory, originally developed to explain variation in children's achievement motivation, is especially useful because it proposes behavioral dispositions that are likely associated with specific beliefs about change. At the basis of Dweck's model is the notion that individuals, including children, hold implicit

theories or beliefs about the malleability of personal qualities (e.g., personality, intelligence). According to the model, some individuals believe that personal qualities are essentially fixed; these individuals are referred to as *entity theorists*. Others believe that personal qualities are malleable and open to development; these individuals are referred to as *incremental theorists*. Dweck and Leggett (1988) argue that these contrasting belief structures or implicit theories are important because they orient individuals toward different goals and, in turn, toward different behavior patterns.

For example, in the area of intelligence, incremental theorists—those who believe that intelligence is malleable—tend to pursue *developmental* goals; that is, their primary goal is to learn and increase their competence. For this reason, incremental theorists tend to seek out and look forward to challenges, viewing them as opportunities for growth and development; moreover, incremental theorists are likely to be persistent in their efforts in achievement situations (e.g., problem-solving tasks). In contrast, entity theorists—those who believe that intelligence is basically fixed—tend to pursue *performance* goals, “in which they seek to establish the adequacy of their ability and to avoid giving evidence of its inadequacy” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 259). Entity theorists are likely to conceive of achievement situations or challenges as tests in which one may be judged as competent or incompetent. Thus, in contrast to incremental theorists, entity theorists tend to avoid challenges—to minimize the risk of being labeled “incompetent”—even though these challenges may afford them opportunities for growth. Because they tend to worry about being judged and they see improvement as unlikely, entity theorists often choose the “easy road” in the face of challenge, and are less persistent in the face of difficulty or setbacks. Notably, Dweck and her colleagues have conducted numerous empirical studies that lend strong support for their model, at least with respect to children’s beliefs and behavior in achievement and social situations (see Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Henderson & Dweck, 1990).

Although Dweck and Leggett (1988) developed their beliefs-goal-behavior model initially with respect to personal qualities or attributes of the self (e.g., implicit theories about intelligence, personality, and social skills), they have proposed the generalizability

of the model beyond the self to so-called "external attributes." In other words, individuals hold implicit theories or beliefs not only about the malleability of personal qualities, but also about the malleability of the larger social ecology. This might include, for example, the dynamics of one's family system or the operations of particular societal institutions. With respect to these beliefs directed beyond the self, Dweck and Leggett (1988) state,

Here an entity theory would assert that people, places, things, and the world in general are what they are and there is little one can do to alter them. An incremental theory would propose that desirable qualities can be cultivated: *People* can be made more competent, *institutions* can be made more responsible, the environment can be made more healthful, the world can be made more just (emphasis added, p. 266).

With respect to the contrasting *behavior* of entity and incremental theorists vis-a-vis the larger social ecology, Dweck and Leggett (1988) proposed that,

An entity theory of external attributes, by its very nature, should inhibit the initiation and pursuit of change, even when an external attribute is judged negatively and improvement is seen as desirable . . . In contrast, when individuals hold an incremental theory of important external attributes (*and* view the attributes as being in need of improvement) . . . they will tend to adopt "development" goals toward those attributes (p. 267).

In short, the generalized model proposes that individuals hold implicit theories about the malleability of the world around them. Those who believe that change and growth are both desirable and possible (incremental theorists) are most likely to initiate and embrace innovation. Those who perceive the world around them as static and relatively impermeable (entity theorists) have less motivation, see challenges as difficulties, and are less likely to pursue efforts toward change.

What can be gained from this theory in the context of professional development and organizational change? Briefly stated, if we assume that the success of both professional development and organizational-level change is dependent on individuals' willingness to change, to seek challenges, and to view new techniques and structures as opportunities for growth, then implicit theories about

change should take center stage. Those staff members who hold an entity theory of themselves in their jobs and of the system in which they work are likely to be those who are concerned about being judged, who are less likely to take risks, and who are less likely to embrace structural and procedural changes. On the other hand, those staff members who hold an incremental theory of themselves in their jobs and of the system in which they work are prime candidates for successful staff development efforts and organizational-level change. These should be the individuals who are less worried about failure and difficulties and are more concerned with opportunities for competence enhancement, organizational growth, and improved services to clients.

Application to a Community-Based Organization

The present research and development project involved work with a large community-based community/youth/family-serving organization (described above). Part of the project's goal is to initiate systems-level change. This entails changes from traditional programs and audiences to the support, development and implementation of programs designed for youth and families at the greatest risk for problems and negative outcomes. Inherent in the change of programs and audiences is a role change for the CYFE from "expert" who delivers programs to clients, to "facilitator" who works in ways to empower clientele. New skills, knowledge, and attitudes are therefore needed.

Dweck's theory and measurement techniques were utilized as a foundation to develop a scale to assess staff opinions regarding the feasibility of making basic changes in this community-based organization (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Henderson & Dweck, 1989). The domains tapped in the scale were informed by the goals for systems change; among the eight domains described in full below are (a) changing general operations; (b) developing collaborative partnerships with local agencies; (c) increasing staff members' competence in program design, implementation, and evaluation; and (d) building supports for balancing the personal and professional lives of staff members.

The research and community development project provided a context within which to pilot the new scale. In addition, interviews with the CYFEs that were part of the larger project allowed

for an examination of both the construct validity of the scale and the value of the theory on which it was based.

Method

During August – September 1994, information was collected from 29 individuals from three different groups associated with the community-based organization: CYFEs ($n = 11$) and administrators at the local ($n = 9$) and state ($n = 9$) levels. The CYFEs provide representation from 11 of the 15 local site CYFE offices in the state. The overall aim of data collection was to assess personal views on the organization's current capacity to serve children, youth, and families at risk; and to tap personal beliefs regarding the possibility and feasibility of change and development in the organization, its way of operating, and its staff. Data were collected via the newly designed questionnaire and follow-up interviews. In almost all cases, the respondents completed the questionnaire first in their own office and then participated in the interview during the same session. The following describes the format and content of the questionnaire and interview protocol.

Questionnaire: Implicit Beliefs About Change Scale

Using Dweck's theory and measurement techniques as a foundation (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Henderson & Dweck, 1989), the 16-item Implicit Beliefs About Change Scale (IBACS) was designed to assess opinions regarding the malleability of the community-based organization. Specifically, the scale assessed opinions regarding the feasibility and likelihood of meaningful changes being made in the organization. The structure of the scale items closely parallels that of the items developed by Henderson and Dweck (1989) in their Theory of Intelligence Measure. An example item from Henderson and Dweck's measure is "You have a certain amount of intelligence and you really can't do much to change it." The items in the new scale tap eight themes: (a) general operations; (b) CYFE methods; (c) client/audience diversity; (d) collaborative partnerships with university faculty; (e) collaborative partnerships with local agencies; (f) CYFE competence in program design, implementation, and evaluation; (g) support for balancing the professional and personal lives of CYFEs; and (h) community regard/respect for the organization. Two items

were developed to tap each of the eight themes. Item response choices follow a 6-point Likert scale format ranging from 6 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*. Scale scores could range from 16 through 96, such that lower scores are indicative of an entity position whereas higher scores are indicative of an incremental position. Example items include:

You can have things like brochures and local ads to try to widen the audience that participates in [this organization's] programming with respect to children, youth, and families at risk, but you can't really make significant increases in audience diversity. (reverse)

It is possible to make major changes in the way [this organization] is regarded in the community with respect to programming for children, youth, and families at risk.

You can have things like staff development meetings, but you can't really increase the level of competence that [the CYFEs] have with respect to children-youth-and-family program design, implementation, and evaluation. (reverse)

Interviews

As part of the project, interviews were conducted with the CYFEs; members of their community advisory boards; and administrators at the local and state levels. Specialized interview schedules were designed for each group. For the purpose of the present study, only the CYFE interviews will be described and reported. The CYFEs work in a variety of locations in the state. Thus, for their convenience and in an attempt to decrease possible apprehension about the process, interviews were conducted by one of the authors at each CYFE's office; in a few instances the interviews were completed over the telephone. Interviews lasted about one hour and twenty minutes on average.

The interviews tapped five general content areas including (a) program and content knowledge related to issues of children, youth, and families; (b) program funding issues, including grant writing; (c) attitudes and skills related to community development and collaboration; (d) attitudes and processes related to client involvement in programming and implementation (empowerment); and (e) organizational structure as it relates to program planning, the balance between personal and professional life, and technical support. Although the interviews were

structured, the respondents' comments were not always limited to responses to the questions asked; and respondents were encouraged to elaborate on additional content areas as they wished. All interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed.

Results

Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

Reliability analysis indicated that this new 16-item scale has good internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .86). The 16 items are presented in Table 1, along with their distributional statistics and item-total correlations. Results of the analysis revealed that the removal of single items would not increase this alpha coefficient. Further analyses conducted on the scale as a whole revealed a mean score of 75.48 with a standard deviation of 7.48 (scores ranged from 54 – 87). Descriptive statistics on item means revealed a mean of 4.72 (range = 3.97 – 5.10). Thus, although there was variability, most respondents in the sample tended to view change as possible and feasible. Respondents were least likely to believe that change was possible in helping the CYFEs balance their professional and personal lives (item 7, mean = 4.07; item 8, mean = 3.97). Respondents were most likely to believe that change was possible in developing relationships with the community (item 11, mean = 5.00; item 13, mean = 5.10).

Validity: Corroborative Qualitative Data

To assess the construct validity of the IBACS, we turned to the interview data as a source of corroborative information. As a first step, CYFEs whose scores on the questionnaire were among highest or lowest (i.e., whose beliefs about change tended to lean in an incremental or entity direction, respectively) were identified. This was followed by a content-analysis of their interviews. In that analysis, we focused on attitudes, goals, and behaviors that Dweck's model would deem reflective of entity and incremental theories of change—level of engagement, feelings of being judged, and efforts toward change. The following quotes, taken from the interviews of several low- and high-scoring CYFEs, illustrate dispositions and behavior consistent with their respective implicit theories.

Table 1
Distributional Statistics and Item-Total Correlations for the Implicit Beliefs About Change Scale

Item	Item Mean	SD	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. With respect to children, youth, and families at risk, ORG operates in a certain way, and you really can't do much to change it.	4.79	.77	.74
2. You can make minor changes here and there, but you can't really change the basic way that ORG operates with respect to children, youth, and families at risk.	4.59	.98	.31
3. It is possible to make significant increases in the diversity of our customers who participate in ORG programming with respect to children, youth, and families at risk. (R)	4.76	1.12	.30
4. You can have things like brochures and local ads to try to widen the audience that participates in ORG programming with respect to children, youth, and families at risk, but you can't really make significant increases in audience diversity.	4.72	.75	.48
5. At present, there is a certain amount of partnership and collaboration between campus faculty and ORG county-based faculty, and you really can't do much to increase it.	4.59	1.02	.29

continued

Item	Item Mean	SD	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
6. You can have things like verbal/ written encouragement, but you can't really do much to increase the amount of partnership and collaboration between campus faculty and ORG county-based faculty.	4.52	.91	.62
7. It is possible that ORG will make major improvements in the way it helps county-based faculty balance their professional and personal lives. (R)	4.07	.84	.36
8. ORG can make minor changes here and there, but overall these changes won't help county-based faculty balance their professional and personal lives.	3.97	.98	.66
9. With respect to children, youth, and families at risk, ORG county-based faculty work in a certain way, and you really can't do much to change that.	4.76	.87	.53
10. You can have things like staff development meetings, but you can't really change the basic way that ORG county-based faculty work with respect to children, youth, and families at risk.	4.76	.69	.71
11. It is possible to make major changes in the way ORG is regarded in the community with respect to programming for children, youth, and families at risk. (R)	5.07	.53	.50
			<i>continued</i>

12. You can have things like local community meetings, but you can't really change the basic way that ORG is regarded in the community with respect to programming for children, youth, and families at risk.	4.90	.62	.62
13. It is possible to make significant increases in the amount of collaboration between community partners and ORG county-based faculty. (R)	5.10	.41	.53
14. You can have things like verbal/written encouragement, but you can't really do much to increase the amount of collaboration between community partners and ORG county-based faculty.	4.97	.63	.69
15. ORG county-based faculty come to their jobs with a certain level of competence with respect to children-youth-and-family program design, implementation, and evaluation, and you really can't do much to increase it.	4.93	.92	.50
16. You can have things like staff development meetings, but you can't really increase the level of competence that ORG county-based faculty have with respect to children-youth-and-family program design, implementation, and evaluation.	5.00	.65	.55

(R) = reverse scored

As part of the interview, all the CYFEs were asked to talk about involving clients such as youth or parents into programming. The responses of the low- and high-scoring CYFEs shared some commonalities, but were distinct with respect to engagement. For example, when discussing client involvement, one of the low-scoring (IBACS score = 61) CYFEs responded:

"I believe we do need it, and I believe in our county we do it, and yet sometimes it is a pain, and it is sometimes a pain to involve my peers."

A second low-scoring (68) CYFE responded in a similar way, that is, with some emphasis on difficulties in achieving active client involvement:

"I think it's extremely important to build [client involvement] into your programs—their opinions and their collaboration. And it's difficult, though. It's a lot of trouble, for one, thinking of the people to be on it, who are available to be a collaborator. Who's got the time, who's available?"

A high-scoring (87) CYFE, who certainly faces the same obstacles as her lower-scoring counterparts, stands out because her response emphasizes the task at hand and its value, rather than difficulties and setbacks. Among her comments she stated:

"... we include clients from the point of view that we go out on home visits and see some of them, and see what they have to say. But, it's more one-on-one [than] group. And then, of course, like I said, the parent aides, who are probably closest to the families. It's like you build programming based on what people say they need, and also on what you see they need."

Although one can sense a general agreement among the three respondents with respect to their views on the importance of client involvement, the low- and high-scorers on the questionnaire seem to differ with respect to level of engagement in the process.

A second issue that arose in most of the interviews concerned CYFEs' autonomy in their work role. In the respective responses of one low-scoring and one high-scoring CYFE one can detect a clear contrast not only in general perspective, but also in level of concern with being judged, and in engagement with the task of programming. The first set of quotes come from an interview with a CYFE whose questionnaire score was among the lowest (61):

Interviewer: Would you like a little more autonomy or would you . . . do you like it the way it is?

R: Actually I feel, I'm very autonomous. In my position . . . I'm basically by myself. Sometimes that can go against me because I don't have the camaraderie, or the presence of other [CYFEs]. And so I try to be very conscious of, that I don't give the impression that I'm, and that has been a problem . . .

I: . . . do you prefer that or would you rather? It sounds . . .

R: I think it's a Catch-22 . . .

In contrast, a high-scoring (87) CYFE seemed to be able to focus more on the issue of community need and programming and less on concerns about the self and being judged. In the discussion about autonomy, she was asked specifically about supervisor input:

I: Do you like it that way, or would you like more input or less input, or do you prefer things the way they are?

R: If we had more time, I'd probably like more; but time is such a critical factor here, that we don't really have the time to sit down and go through a formal thing. We both know the issues and we both know what's needed and it's kind of like, this is such fertile ground, you can throw a dart and you hit a need there.

A third theme explored in the CYFE interviews was the extent to which the CYFE turns to and values the support of the university-based faculty specialists. This is a key aspect of the organization in which the CYFEs work, especially in this time of attempts at systems change. Here again, the responses of one low- and one high-scoring CYFE reveal a contrast in engagement. The first response was taken from an interview with a low-scoring CYFE (61):

I: How often do you utilize campus faculty for support of information, or as a resource, or do you?

R: To be honest, not very often . . . And mainly that's because there aren't a whole heck of a lot of them . . . It's better now, but in the past, [involvement in the organization] has not been something they've been told or encouraged to do. It was too much of a hassle [for me] and I would just go somewhere else.

One high-scoring (87) CYFE has had the same opportunity structure with respect to campus-based faculty, yet her engagement and enthusiasm are in marked contrast to her low-scoring counterpart:

I: How often do you utilize campus faculty . . . ?

R: Probably once a month.

I: What types of information?

R: It really varies. Okay, maybe, for example, where I can find some information on X. And, I know I was in Becky's [a campus-based faculty specialist] office one day, and she had the funding sourcebook there, and I said, "That's great, you have that?" and she said, "Yeah, do you want to copy of the section that you need?" That type of thing. And the same thing with Mary Lynne [another specialist].

In short, the previous sets of quotes lend clear support for the construct validity of the theory-grounded questionnaire. The CYFEs whose questionnaire scores would imply a strong incremental view—that is, a belief in the feasibility and likelihood of meaningful changes being made in the organization, its staff, and methods—were those whose interview responses revealed behavior and a general perspective of engagement, of concern with clients and programming rather than self, and a welcoming of information, input, and approaches. The CYFEs whose questionnaire scores were relatively low—leaning in the direction of an entity belief structure regarding change—were those who were much less engaged in challenges (e.g., client involvement), who indicated concern with self including fear of being judged, and who framed opportunities for innovation as hassles to be overcome and sometimes avoided.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to design and evaluate a theory-grounded measure that taps beliefs about the possibility for change in an organization which serves children, youth and families at the community level. Interest in the front line workers' beliefs about the possibility for change emerged from staff development planning efforts integral to a comprehensive project for systems-level change in the organization. The rationale for measuring staff beliefs about change derived from a

motivation theory that features two contrasting beliefs structures (entity vs. incremental), and the goals and behavioral dispositions associated with each (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). This beliefs-goal-behavior model suggests that staff beliefs regarding the possibility for change in the organization should play a critical role in the success of attempts at professional and organizational development. Specifically, we argued that CYFEs who hold an entity theory (fixed model) of themselves in their jobs and of the system in which they work are likely to be those who are concerned about being judged, who are less likely to take risks, and who are less likely to embrace structural and procedural changes. Conversely, we argued that CYFEs who hold an incremental theory (development model) of themselves in their jobs and of the system in which they work are prime candidates for successful staff development efforts and organizational-level change; incremental theorists would be the CYFEs who are less worried about failure and difficulties, and who are more concerned with opportunities for competence enhancement, organizational growth, and improved services to clients.

Quantitative analyses indicated that the IBACS is a reliable instrument—as evidenced in good internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .86). The IBACS also yields sufficient response variance—although in this study all scores fell above the scale's midpoint. The latter suggests that most respondents held an incremental view of change. Qualitative analyses provided evidence of the scale's construct validity. More specifically, content analysis of the semi-structured interviews uncovered distinctive behavioral dispositions of the CYFEs whose beliefs regarding change could be characterized as either incremental or entity in nature, as measured via the questionnaire. As the theoretical model would predict, the CYFEs whose questionnaire scores would imply strong beliefs in the feasibility and likelihood of meaningful changes being made in the organization, were those whose interview responses revealed behavior and a general perspective of engagement, of concern with clients and programming rather than the self, and a welcoming of new information and approaches. In contrast, the CYFEs whose questionnaire scores reflected a belief that the various facets of the organization are rather static and not especially changeable were those who were much less engaged in

challenges such as client involvement, indicated concern with self including fear of being judged, and perceived some opportunities for innovation as hassles to be overcome and avoided.

In brief, Dweck's theoretical model, initially developed to explain children's behavior in the face of achievement-related challenges, appears to extend well to adult professionals who design and implement programs for families and youth in the context of a large, yet community-based organization. It is notable that although the difference between questionnaire scores of the highest and lowest scoring CYFEs was not extreme, that difference was sufficient to translate into rather divergent patterns of behavioral dispositions as reflected in the interview responses. In other words, the IBACS appears to be a sensitive tool for tapping differences in staff belief structures regarding change.

The IBACS, therefore, is a good example of the potential value of coupling theory and research with staff development efforts. Indeed, the IBACS may prove to be a useful tool for professionals who design and evaluate staff development efforts. In traditional assessments of staff development, the typical focus is on the measurement of knowledge, skill, and perhaps attitudes toward a specific technique before and after the intervention (Fullan, 1990). The IBACS offers an additional, alternative focus—that is, orientation toward change. Briefly stated, the IBACS may be useful both as a measurement of readiness for staff development when administered prior to intervention efforts, and as an alternative marker of the success of staff development. This alternative marker is important because implicit beliefs about change appear to serve as the foundation for the larger goals of staff development efforts.

If implicit beliefs about change in the self and the organization indeed serve as a critical foundation for goals and behavior, then future research needs to examine both the origins of these belief structures and whether these belief structures themselves are malleable or relatively impermeable to change. There is empirical evidence available that would suggest that these belief structures may be malleable, at least to a degree. In their studies of children's implicit beliefs about learning and intelligence, Elliott and Dweck (1988) found that developmental beliefs and their associated incremental (growth) goals could be fostered under

experimental conditions. An investigation of whether incremental goals can be fostered in adults as well as children is needed. If adult beliefs about change are found to be malleable, that work could be extended beyond experimental settings to the field of staff development.

It is clear that the implications for staff development design, implementation, and evaluation are many. At the very least, this research would suggest that attitudes toward change need to be assessed. Moreover, in the context of community organizations, perhaps one way to change beliefs and subsequent sense of control is to involve staff in the planning stages. Third, staff development programs need to be designed to incorporate objectives and activities that teach to the belief that change is possible. Lastly, evaluation of staff development should include assessment of orientation toward change and the application of the material, and not just change in knowledge and attitude toward the subject matter.

In conclusion, assessment of beliefs about change can draw out potential barriers to change so that they can be avoided or counteracted to maximize staff development effectiveness (Wyant & Bell, 1981). Measuring beliefs about change may enable scholars to evaluate the effect of those beliefs on the larger goals of organizational-level change.

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