

Earning an ICF Credential

Applying for an ICF Credential and Demonstrating Your
Competence in the Oral Exam

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Hosted by:

George Rogers

ICF - Assistant Executive Director

&

Tracy Stevens, MCC

ICF - Volunteer Assessor



Advancing the Art, Science, and Practice of Professional Coaching

Tips for demonstrating your competence in the oral exam



Tracy L. Stevens, MCC

- Leadership & Team Dynamics in Global Markets
- Individual and Organizational Assessment
- Career Development
- Effective Communications
- Coaching Skills Development for Leaders & Coaches
- Over 30 years of Business Experience in the public & private sectors
- Mentor Coaching - Leader/Manager as Coach & Professional Coaches

Establishing the Coaching Agreement

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- Coach takes what client says they want to work on at surface level.
- PCC- Coach takes what client says they want to work on.
- MCC- Coach explores fully what client wants from session, establishes measures of success for client in session, and ensures that client and coach are both clear about coaching purpose.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach chooses the topic for the client*
- *coach does not coach around the topic the client has chosen*
- *coach does not check with the client about whether the client is moving toward what the client wanted from the session.*



Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- Coach attends to client's agenda, but is attached to his/her own performance and therefore trust and intimacy is not the strongest competency.
- PCC- Coach may have some degree of trust in client and connected relationship to client.
- MCC- Sense of complete ease and naturalness in conversation; coach does not have to “work” to coach

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach does not seek information from the client*
- *the attention seems to be on the coach's own performance or demonstration of knowledge about the topic.*
- *any indication that the coach is teaching rather than coaching*



Coaching Presence

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- Coach attends to client's agenda, but is attached to his/her own performance and therefore presence is diluted by coach's own attention to self.
- PCC- Coach is a connected observer to client.
- MCC-The connection is to whole of who client is, how the client learns, what the client has to teach the coach.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach demonstrates significant interest in the coach's view of the situation rather than exploring the client's view of the situation*
- *coach, rather than being present and responsive to the client, is overly reliant on an obvious coaching formula, a specific coaching tool, or standard coaching questions*



Active Listening

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- Coach hears what client says and responds to it, but only at obvious and surface level.
- PCC- The listening is focused on the client's agenda and can change direction if the client changes direction.
- MCC- The coach hears the totality of the client's greatness and gifts as well as limiting beliefs and patterns.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach's response is not related to what the client is trying to achieve*
- *coach demonstrates that they can only hear through their own perceptions, and models of thinking, learning, and creating rather than being able to hear some of the client's models and methods of thinking, learning, and creating.*



Powerful Questioning

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- Questions attend to client's agenda, but are generally seeking information, are formulaic, and sometimes leading or have a "correct answer" anticipated by the coach.
- PCC- Questions attend to client's agenda and generally are a mix of informational and powerful questions.
- MCC- The coach asks mostly, if not always, direct, evocative questions that are fully responsive to the client in the moment and that requires significant thought by client or take client to a new place of thinking.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach does not focus on an inquiring versus telling methodology*
- *the majority of questions contain already pre-determined answers by the coach*
- *coach frequently asks informational questions or questions that keep the client in the past or in present detail of a situation rather than in forward thinking*



Direct Communication

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- The coach sometimes is fairly direct, but usually uses too many words or feels a need to “dress up” a question or observation.
- PCC- The coach has a sufficient, but not broad base of language tools to use with the client.
- MCC- The coach creates sufficient space for the client to have equal or more communication time than the coach.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach does not attend to the client's agenda, changes the agenda without input from the client, or appears attached to a particular outcome or solution*
- *coach significantly or dominantly relies on their own language, thinking models, and models of learning without use of the client's skill set in these areas*
- *coach does not fully invite the client's participation in the coaching dialogue on an equal level*



Creating Awareness

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- Awareness generated at level of what will solve problem or achieve goal.
- PCC- The coach will generally help the client integrate new awareness as it pertains to a particular situation versus using learning to more fully broaden the scope of new awareness.
- MCC- The use of the client's greatness invited and welcomed. There is no evidence of "fixing" a problem for the client.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach's communication reflects an agenda or directing of any kind by the coach*
- *coach seems to substitute assessments or standard coaching exercises for powerful questioning or inquiry*



Designing Actions

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- The coach tends to suggest homework and actions that they think would best handle the problem or achieve the goal.
- PCC- the actions are attuned to solving the situational issue the client has presented rather than looking beyond the situation to other, broader learning that might be inherent in the situation.
- MCC- The coach works in complete partnership with the client to design actions or, in the alternative, lets the client lead in designing actions.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach insists the client do what the coach has prescribed as homework*
- *there is little or no co-creation in the process of designing actions*
- *suggested tools and structures clearly do not bear a relationship to the needs of the particular client or his/her agenda, or are imposed on the client without discussion.*



Planning and Goal Setting

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- The coach tends to adopt goal suggested by the client at their most obvious level
- PCC- The coach works with the client to clarify and develop goals that achieve more than just the presenting concerns of the client
- MCC- The coach lets the client lead in designing goals in planning or, works in complete partnership with the client to create goals and plans.

Needs Improvement if:

- *coach insists that the client follow a prescribed plan familiar to the coach*
- *coach is the most significant voice in suggesting plans and goals*
- *Coach does not invite full client participation in planning strategies or designing goals or dominates in the creation of plans and goals*



Managing Progress and Accountability

Positive Indicators:

- ACC- The coach tends to suggest forms of accountability that may feel a bit parental in nature
- PCC- The coach is in some partnership with the client to develop methods of accountability.
- MCC- The coach trusts the client to be accountable to themselves and calls the client to account for or discuss if agreed-upon forward movement does not occur.

Needs Improvement if:

- *Coach insists that the client follow prescribed measures and structures familiar to the coach*
- *Coach is the most significant voice in setting accountability structures*
- *Coach suggests standard coaching tools or exercises without discussing with the client the extent to which they might be of value to the client*



Contact ICF

ICF Headquarters

2365 Harrodsburg Rd, Suite A325

Lexington, KY 40504 - USA

+1.859.219.3580

icfheadquarters@coachfederation.org

www.coachfederation.org

