

Accredited Certificate in Coach Training

Delivered by Marshall Vere Associates

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This workbook contains information to support your learning and development as you embark upon your coaching journey and has information covered in Day Six, sessions 1 and 2 of 4.

It is designed to be tailored to your needs and as you progress through the programme you will add additional logs, templates, exercises, questionnaires, and reflective practice activities.

It is a requirement of this AC Accredited Certificate in Coach Training that you complete the required 60+ hours of class based training and supervision, 40 hours of self-study and 20 hours of coaching practice (outside of class) in order to receive your certificate.

Further resources and blank templates can be found in the Programme Resources area at <https://marshallvereassociates.co.uk/my-account/>

Your Login is ACCT-1 for self-study 1 and your password is unique to you.

Your Login is ACCT-2 for self-study 2 and your password is unique to you.

Your Login is ACCT-3 for self-study 3 and your password is unique to you.

As a participant in this Accredited Certificate in Coach Training Programme, you are automatically entitled to one year's free student Membership of the Association for Coaching and you are encouraged to access all resources available and to engage in the activities offered to add to your continuous professional development (CPD).

Useful information:

Marshall Vere Associates www.marshallvereassociates.co.uk 01522 595 530

Professional Membership Bodies:

Association for Coaching (AC) www.associationforcoaching.com

European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC) www.emccouncil.org

International Coach Federation (ICF) www.coachfederation.org

The British Psychological Society (BPS) www.bps.org.uk

The Association for Professional Executive Coaching & Supervision (APECS) www.apecs.org

The International Society for Coaching Psychologists (ISCP) www.isfcp.net

Day Six: Constellations, Cards and Connections

Outputs from today – Session 1 and 2 of 4

- Review of Day Five – Sessions 3 and 4
 - Effective Contracting
 - Self-assessment update
 - Creative tools
- Constellations in Coaching
 - What is it?
 - Video demonstration
 - When can it be used?
 - Practical application of systemic coaching
- Implement, practise, and demonstrate AC Coaching Competencies
- Feedback on your coaching practice

Constellation is a technical term used in the human sciences to identify a system as a set of elements in relationship to one another.

So, we can use the word Constellation to refer to: a working team, a relationship, an organisation, the key elements of a project, the choices available for a decision, or the parts of our inner world.

Systemic Constellations provide Coaches with an extremely powerful tool – that can be used in both individual and team or group Coaching – in order to help clients *achieve their objectives* with exceptional results.

Map Making

Maps are one of the oldest forms of human communication. Map-making predates written language. Okada.

Getting started

Most coaches, even those who spend most of their time working with groups and teams, seem to find that learning and practicing through one-to-one application is a useful context in which to understand and develop skills in using this approach. A few find it easier to start working in a workshop environment, though that's less common because the facilitator's role is so different from most other kinds of group facilitation. This book addresses both applications but takes as its starting point the application in one-to-one coaching.

Mapping, the first phase of a constellation, can be done without a comprehensive knowledge or long experience of constellations. When it is done within appropriate boundaries and the limits of the facilitator's experience, mapping can be a profoundly helpful stand-alone intervention in and of itself. You can work in a way that feels safe for you and the client by 'mapping what is' and agreeing to have a look at it and then stop, either by naming that this is all that you are offering - to take an initial look - or by agreeing a time limit. This kind of clear boundary-making is often a releasing experience for the client, allowing them to feel safe enough to make take a fresh look at a challenging issue in the knowledge of the limits you've agreed.

Gaining permission to work

When you feel that you may be dealing with an issue that could benefit from a systems perspective and intervention, you can ask permission to look at it in a fresh way. This is more about inviting your client to look at that issue or question in 'a different way' than naming 'systemic constellations' or anything to do with you or this work. In fact, by not naming a constellation you create a space of expectation, and the client is taken to a heightened level of inquiry with their issue. In just a few words you've invited them to move into a new way of looking at old or apparently intractable issues.

For example, when your client is facing into a challenge, or very stuck issue, you could simply say something like: 'I can hear that you are really struggling to find resolution with this - would you like to look at it in a different way?' or 'How would it be for you if we looked at this in a rather a different way, a way that relies less on words and more relationship patterns?' or 'What would it be like to explore your inner picture of this and take a look at it in a fresh way?'

Very often the client will agree to look in a new way and then hand the next step back to you. Occasionally they will tell you how many different ways they've already looked at it and explain why it's not possible to resolve. Again, you can offer to look at it in a different way, adding that you are inviting them to come out of their heads and into another way of knowing about things that they may not have explored before.

There is one other aspect of getting permission to work that's important in this approach to system health. That is, does the person you are working with have permission to access the system? The permission we are talking about here is the role and responsibility to action anything after the constellation. If the client doesn't have that role and responsibility then there is a chance that they are just looking at it out of curiosity, or out of frustration with the one who does. In those circumstances it will be more valuable to offer a constellation that illuminates and clarifies their relationship with the boss, rather than trying to do the boss's work.

One way of checking for permission, apart from your own sensing into the question, is to ask your client to take a moment to 'go inside' and reflect on whether they have the permission to explore this issue. Not only does that refine their sensitivity to somatic information and system dynamics, but it also usually creates a deeper contact with the real issue and clarity about permission levels. This generates respect and a deeper level of work, usually follows.

Moving into the first stage

This first stage, mapping, provides a relatively easy way into constellations for the client, but also for coach who is at the early stages of learning about systems and needs to work within their own learning boundaries. Limiting the scope of your work with your client helps to make the opening up of the client's reference system safe enough for you both to step into the system and step out again before too long.

The mapping process is broken down into the 'interview', the 'mapping' itself and the 'closure stage', though in practice the flow from one to another is seamless. The first stage, the 'interview' may simply be experienced by your client is no different to any other questions you may ask, but you are feeding your way - and inviting your client to join you - into a broader system-wide perspective of their issue; into a different way of 'knowing'.

The interview

In this part of the process, when you are at the early stages of your learning journey simply ask three questions:

1. What is the issue in just a few words?

This helps people to get free of their stories, the judgments, and the attachments. By asking for the issue in 'just a few words', you emphasise that you are keen to get to the heart of it. You also create a level of permission to ask your client to reduce the amount of words they are using if you feel they are reattaching to a familiar story.

The next question moves you in the client into a more solution-orientated space where the answer lies waiting - and will be briefly embodied in your client, (i.e., breathing out, sitting up and so on) as they describe the picture of resolution.

2. What would be different, for you, if this issue was more resolved?

The answer to this question will often contain the word 'feel', as in 'I'd feel much more able to do my work', 'I feel free and energised', or 'I'd feel clear and strong and safe in my role'. So you can modify the question to include that for example: 'How would you feel if this issue were resolved?'

The purpose of this question is to agree a destination, not the journey.

It provides an anchor to return to and to rest, the usefulness of the constellation at the end. By this stage the client has already created an inviting glimpse, a taste of the resolution, and is invested in finding a path towards it. But unlike in many coaching approaches, you are not about to set a goal or visualise a path to that resolution. You are going to do something else, something that simply starts with an acknowledgment of what is.

3. If we were to create a map of this issue, what would be the most resonant elements to include?

This is an invitation to list out the key elements (very often people) that are connected into the client's issue. You can invite them to start with themselves, i.e., 'So there's you... and who or what else?' Or you can invite them to list three or four most important elements or people around the issue. They may say something like, 'Well, there's my boss, the team objective and our main customer'. A mix of specific people and abstracts like 'purpose' is common and allows them to set up a useful relational map between the elements. In any case, you can now invite them to include themselves and notice the impact of that as it can often be part of the information in itself. Once you have agreed the most important elements- ideally no more than three or four, as you can add more later if needed – you are ready to begin the mapping.

The mapping

In order to set up a map that's going to be useful and allow an exploration of the system, you will first need to set the boundary. Setting the boundary and selecting an object to represent the client or their issue can be achieved together. Start by simply saying something like this: 'How would it be if this tabletop represents the whole company and this sheet of paper is the leadership team...?'

Next, check for the client's own sense of meaning, relative size, position and so on. Continue your facilitation with something like this: 'Now pick up the representative for yourself and find the place in this map that feels true to your inner sense of what this is like for you... a place that embodies your inner picture of your place in this map. Just as it is, without wishing it to be different or better'. Note that if your client struggles to find their place within the system boundary - also information in itself - you can invite them to set up the first two representatives, in relation to each other, at the same time. For example, 'self' and 'team purpose'.

This simple invitation often creates a powerful effective system map very quickly, and already the client is feeling their way into the core of their issue, their experience, their truth. The two things to highlight for a client who may be new to this way of working are *direction* and *distance*.

For direction you will need to help them indicate which way the attention is drawn in each object. With all of the available constellation stones, blocks and 'chips', a direction of attention is indicated by a notch or a point. If you're using post-its or objects like bottles of water, cups and other 'found objects', ensure that you are both clear about the directional aspect. Handles on cups or arrows on post-its, for example, provide a very effective way of indicating the direction of attention.

As for distance, you can guide your client in this aspect like this. 'Just notice as you place each object how close or far away they are from each other. Just notice that, without wishing it to be any different'.

As long as direction of attention and distance are attended to, the client will be dropping down into a deeper level of contact with their issue once they set up their first image. It's often useful to check with the client for the details by asking: 'So, in this spatial relationship map it appears that you're looking directly at the finance director; is that right?' or when they appear to be looking beyond the adjacent representative object: 'Does this indicate that your attention is drawn out to something else?'

Think of yourself as the facilitator/coach not just 'a coach'. This methodology requires you to do something else as well as coach; in fact, it requires you to hold back on occasions from coaching.

As a general rule of thumb, it's almost always best to start small. For example, start with simply the client and their place in a system in relationship to just one other element. If someone is talking about a team, try to encourage them, at this stage at least, to select one object to represent the whole team. This keeps things focused and helps both the coach and client to stay at the central point of contact with the issue or question. You can get more granular later.

At any stage you can check that the coachee has created something that feels true for them by asking: 'Do you recognise this?' That question usually elicits a positive response but also some more information. You can also check for more like this: 'OK, and is there anything else that's important here? Anyone or anything else that needs to be included at this stage?'

Articulating one of the core principles of this work - that everything has a place - in this way is often the point at which somebody or something that has been excluded by the client or the wider reference system emerges: 'Oh yes, I've just remembered there was a ...'

This way of working goes well when you take it slowly. The whole of the sequence above for example may take anywhere between five and thirty minutes with all the reflection, new information, adjustments and insights that came naturally when the map appears.

Very often mapping doesn't need go too much further than this. This stage is often enough to reveal fresh perspectives and insights, along with a range of new information for processing and exploration in the coaching relationship and process. As this is just an initial mapping exercise, it's important that you feel able to bring it to a close, to ensure that the observations and insights are captured and that it doesn't go into areas that you and/or the client are not yet ready to work with. However, more often than not, you will find yourself coaching from this new perspective and moving back into usual or preferred way of working, with this new information forming a fresh path forward. It's not so much an end as a start.

The closure

A good way to bring this first part, this initial mapping, to an end (or at least a pause) is simply to ask: 'So, what fresh information or insights have you gained from looking at the issue like this?' Another thing you can do here is to suggest that your client stands up and walks slowly around the table that you've been working on to get different perspectives on their own map. Then you could simply ask: 'What do you notice as you look at this?'

You can also give the boundaries their place and name them. For example: 'We agreed that we just look at this, rather than going any deeper, [or 'We agreed we'd spend just 10 minutes of our time on this aspect'] so is it OK if we draw this to a close for now and spend a little time reflecting on what you've already got from this...?'

In these ways you can move back into a 'head space'. The client can start to make rational sense of the map they have just created and you can help them process this. This 'sense-making' is an important aspect to include, especially when working with clients who may not be so familiar with illuminating their inner picture of a relationship system or trusting their 'felt sense' of the issue.

This kind of approach to mapping 'what is' often creates a very much more focused and lively coaching agenda than if the client had simply told you the 'story'. This makes it a useful thing to do early on in the coaching process and relationship.

On occasion the client may experience real difficulty coming out of the mapping, because they are already in touch with the deeper forces in the system and are attracted to the idea of continuing. This may also be true for the coach. In these circumstances you may need to go via an alternative, slightly longer route to reach an acceptable closure. The closure needs to be done with sensitivity, as coming out too soon or too late can have a weakening effect on the client.

In situations where there is a difficulty in finishing, invite the client to simply move one of the representative objects to a 'better place'. For example, you might say something like this: 'We've agreed to limit this first look, but I can see that you'd like to move on a little further with this. So, choose one of the objects in this map that you've created and see if you can move it to a place that feels like it is a first step towards a better place, a first step to resolution... 'This kind of invitation will often result in clarity and insight in which the client identifies what needs to happen next in order to start moving towards a more settled system. Whatever they identify will do will change something and allow you to bring it to a close and move back into coaching and/or processing.

It can also be useful, particularly when seeing a complex or stuck initial image, to invite your client to pause to revisit and examine their central question. Another way of doing this is to ask: 'If this the answer. What's the question?'

At a point that feels appropriate in the mapping process you can revert to your preferred coaching dialogue style and work with the information and insights that have emerged. You can then invite your client to return to the mapping if you sense that may be useful.

Mapping may soon evolve into fuller constellations, but you will feel more able to develop your scope and skills as a constellator if you feel secure in the knowledge that you can respectively close the process down and return to a more familiar style of coaching.

Notes

Coaching cards come in various guises, from plain text questions to elaborate images, all designed with the purpose of helping others to explore or express more profound thoughts and emotions associated with any given theme.

Five benefits of Coaching cards:

1. They can help you add value to the question.
Sometimes the challenge is not in finding the right answer, but in asking the right question. Adding value to the definition of the challenge might help you find a more profound response to it.
2. The cards can increase the quality of your brainstorming and ideation process.
Because using cards overrides the rational brain, they can help to get authentic association that might lead to unique solutions.
3. They help reach deeper thoughts and knowledge while keeping their mind in safe mode.
The more profound thought, emotion and intuitive understanding are already there, influencing the decision. Using cards is a less intrusive way of connecting with those thoughts and emotions.
4. Cards offer inspiration when the challenges may seem insurmountable, or the 'issue holder' cannot see a way through to a successful outcome.
Regardless of whether the individual considers themselves and/or their field of work creative or not creative, generating potential options is often a creative process. The primary challenge of all creative processes is the moment before a breakthrough, the point where the individual feels blocked as if they'll never get to the other side. This feeling might be so unpleasant that many people make a U-turn at that point and take the step back, depriving themselves of more significant success.
Using the cards can help your clients to explore possible options, trigger insights into the situation and unblock thought processes.
5. Coaching cards can increase the quality of a team or group communication.
Cards can help teams and groups get to the crux of the matter faster, with the feeling of joy and curiosity.

Notes

Additional resources

Review:

- Excerpts from Systemic Coaching and Constellations by John Whittington

Next sessions

Session	Topic	Day	Date	Time
Day 6 – Sessions 3 & 4	Constellations, Cards and Connections	Sunday	28 th March 2021	09:00 – 13:00
SUPERVISION		Wednesday	31st March 2021	19:00 – 20:00
Day 7 – Sessions 1 & 2	Coaching Leaders	Saturday	10 th April 2021	09:00 – 13:00
Day 7 – Sessions 3 & 4		Sunday	9 th May 2021	09:00 – 13:00
SUPERVISION		Wednesday	19th May 2021	19:00 – 20:00
Day 8 – Sessions 1 & 2	Purpose, Planning and Practicalities	Saturday	5 th June 2021	09:00 – 13:00
Day 8 – Sessions 3 & 4		Saturday	19 th June 2021	09:00 – 13:00

Self-study Activities

Checklist Three

These are the self-study activities that need to be completed between Module Six and Module 7.

In total, there are 14 hours of self-study, 7 hours of coaching practice and Supervision consisting of 3 x 45-minute webinars.

Additional information for all self-study activities and blank templates can be found in the Programme Resources area at

<https://marshallvereassociates.co.uk/my-account/> Your Login is ACCT-2 and your password is unique to you.

Activity	Learning Objective	Approximate time allocated in minutes	Date completed
Self-study activities after Session 1 and 2 of 4 Day Six			
Complete your Coaching Experience Log after each coaching session	Implement Best Practice for Professional Coaches	120	
Complete your reflective journal after each coaching practice session (7 x 1-hour sessions)	Implement Best Practice for Professional Coaches	210	
Watch Ruby Wax Session on Beyond Frazzled	Understanding yourself and your clients	60	
Attend one AC Group Supervision Experience (ACGSE) Call	Understanding how supervision impacts on coaching	60	
Watch AC Live Coaching Demonstration 'Reflect to Create!'	Understanding yourself and your clients	60	
Review all materials for Day 5 – Sessions 3 and 4	Expanding knowledge of coaching tools and approaches	120	
Read excerpts from Systemic Coaching and Constellations by John Whittington	Expanding knowledge of coaching tools and approaches	60	
Incorporate Systemic Coaching and/or coaching cards into a coaching practice session	Expanding knowledge of coaching tools and approaches	60	
Additional self-study for Day 6 sessions 3 and 4 of 4		90	
Total time spent of self-study		840 minutes = 14 hours	