



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVALUATIONS VIA TAPE

ICEA Childbirth Educator Certification Program

The ICEA Childbirth Educator Certification Program allows for audio or video taped evaluations to meet the needs of those who cannot be evaluated in person due to lack of qualified evaluators in one's community or other reasons. The ICEA qualified evaluator is often the only individual personally involved in the ICEA candidate's certification program. As such, the evaluator has a significant impact on how an educator perceives her/his performance in class and on targeting areas for growth. The following suggestions will increase the effectiveness of an evaluation by tape. These recommendations are offered for the convenience and consideration of both candidate and evaluator. They are not requirements of the ICEA Childbirth Educator Certification Program.

ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN CANDIDATE AND EVALUATOR

When arranging for an evaluation, agreement on the amount of reimbursement (if any), payment arrangements, time constraints and expectations on the part of both the candidate and the evaluator is essential. Agreement should also be reached on payment arrangements in the event of an incomplete or unsuccessful evaluation.

METHOD OF TAPING

Video tapes are preferable because they provide the evaluator with visual information that is difficult to relay via audio tape. If standard cassette audio tapes are used, the evaluator and candidate may agree that on-site evaluation of one or more classes be done by a local person.

ON-SITE EVALUATIONS

The on-site evaluator need not meet the ICEA criteria for a qualified evaluator, though it is recommended that s/he have experience in childbirth education. The on-site evaluator may give appropriate input to the ICEA qualified evaluator on class assessment sheet, Form A. The qualified evaluator makes the final determination on the outcome of the evaluation.

AIDING THE EVALUATOR

To get a feel for the candidate and the teaching context, an evaluator may request a letter from the candidate telling about the candidate's birth experiences, experience as an educator, names and addresses of local educators to contact (if applicable), the community, a general profile of the clients s/he teaches and the family-centered options available to them.

Background information on the participants' parity, age, profession, risk factors, reasons for coming to class, etc., can help the evaluator assess whether the candidate is meeting individual needs. Copies of all class hand-outs and any text should accompany the letter. Films or slide series shown should be made available to the evaluator to view if s/he is not already familiar with them. If audio tapes are used, it is helpful for the candidate to send photographs of herself, the class, the facility and the visual aids along with the first set

of tapes. This will enable the evaluator to visualize the educator and the class during the evaluation. After each session, the candidate can either tape or write perceptions of that particular class to further enhance the evaluator's understanding.

Tapes can be mailed to the evaluator weekly, in groups or altogether. Weekly mailings allow for interchange during the evaluated series, which can be valuable to both candidate and evaluator.

CLIENT CONSIDERATIONS

Candidates are strongly encouraged to inform clients upon registration that the class will be taped as a prerequisite to ICEA certification.

TECHNICAL CONCERNS

It is suggested that the video camera be hand held by an assistant, whereby allowing freedom of movement by the educator. If another individual operates the tape recorder, the educator will be more free to teach. It is the candidate's responsibility to test the filming and recording devices and provide sufficient supply of tapes and extension cords when necessary.

It is vital that the microphone be close enough to the educator to record clearly. In the case of audio tapes, a lavalier microphone is recommended, or a small hand-held dictating device which facilitates easy movement around the room. When answering questions or conducting a discussion, it is helpful if the candidate paraphrases the key points so the evaluator has a greater understanding of the direction of the conversation.

A STEP BEYOND

After listening to the tapes and completing the required forms, an evaluator can greatly enhance the candidate's growth by accompanying the forms with a personal letter. This letter could include a general assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the series, offer specific suggestions for alternate ways of presenting information and provide additional references and resources. Such a letter moves the evaluator from a position of judge to one of tutor, and can have a significant effect on the candidate's direction in the future.