

**Competency-Oriented Interviewing**

**PTC/SC- Annual Conference  
November 2012**

*Shirley Chang and Chanjira Luu  
Los Angeles County Office of Education*

[Chang\\_shirley@lacoed.edu](mailto:Chang_shirley@lacoed.edu)  
[Luu\\_chanjira@lacoed.edu](mailto:Luu_chanjira@lacoed.edu)

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---

**What we'll cover...** 

---

- o Steps to develop competency-based interviews with your Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- o Designing and writing competency-oriented interview questions
  - "Behavioral Interviewing"
- o Interview Questions Database (IQD)

2

---

---

---


---

---

---

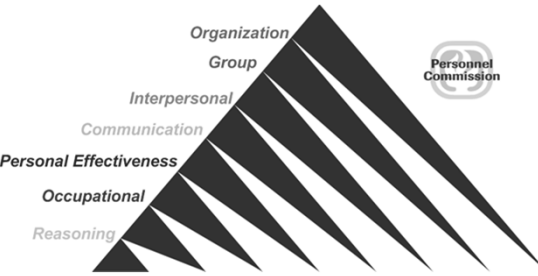
---

---

**LACOE Competencies** 

---

50 competencies in 7 Groups



3

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

### 50 Competencies in 7 Groupings



1. **REASONING:** Competencies needed for learning, using information and data, and intelligent performance
2. **OCCUPATIONAL:** The knowledge and skills of an occupational group acquired through training and experience
3. **PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS:** Competencies that enable the effective application of one's skills and abilities
4. **COMMUNICATION:** Competencies that facilitate the give and take of information
5. **INTERPERSONAL:** Competencies that establish and maintain effective working relationships
6. **GROUP:** Competencies that help make teams, workgroups, units effective
7. **ORGANIZATION:** Competencies that help make whole organizations and systems effective

4

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

### Competency List (2nd edition)



<b>Reasoning</b>	Handling Stress Innovation Integrity and Ethics Safety Focus Self Management	<b>Group</b>
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Decision Making Design Sense Gathering and Analyzing Data Mathematical Agility Reading Comprehension	<b>Communication</b> Bilingual Facility Informing Oral Communication Presentation Skill Writing	Assessing Talent Cultural Proficiency Empowering Others Developing Others Group Facilitation Leadership Managing Performance Teamwork
<b>Occupational</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Organizational</b>
Continuous Learning Environmental Exposure Tolerance Industry Awareness Legal and Regulatory Navigation Physical/Perceptual Abilities Professional/Technical Expertise Using Technology	Customer Focus Handling Conflict Influencing Involving Others Negotiating Professional Impact Relationship Building	Fiscal Acumen Leveraging Technology Managing Change Organizational Design Organizational Savvy Process Improvement Project Management Strategic View
<b>Personal Effectiveness</b>		
Action & Results Focus Adaptability Attention to Detail Dependability		

5

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

### Example Competency



#### Teamwork

*Blending one's capabilities and effort with those of others toward a common goal*

<i>Effective</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>
Understands one's role on the team and does whatever is needed to make the team a success. Helps team members who need or ask for assistance. Puts team results ahead of personal success. Won't stand by and let a teammate struggle or fail. Shares credit for group accomplishments.	May not fully participate in the team or may interact with only part of the team. May be overly critical of others on the team or scapegoat one or more team members. May show an attitude of "It's not my job" when asked for help. May maneuver to stand out from others for individual gain or recognition. May undermine others' work for personal advancement.

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Example Levels- Teamwork



#### Behavior

1. Participate and doing one's part on a team. Help teammates.
2. Show recognition and appreciation of others' abilities and contribution. Strengthen member bonds. Volunteer without being asked.
3. Exercise peer leadership in maintaining focus, support others, promote and ensure collaborative effort and team morale. Inspire and motivate teammates.

#### Content/Context

1. Group of independent contributors. Low interdependency of members. Established, well-functioning team environment. Homogeneous team composition in level and functions.
2. Complex heterogeneous, cross functional team composition. High member interdependency. Leaderless team. Team start-up.
3. Teaming across organizational boundaries with multiple external reporting relationships. High member interdependency over long period.

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Working in collaboration with the SMEs



#### Steps to complete a competency Model:

- o Rating the criticality and frequency of each duty
- o Selecting and rating the competencies
- o Determining the extent in which each competency differentiates excellent from good performers
- o Resulting in exam design matrix

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Working With the SMEs



#### 1. Determine the exam design

- Target on most crucial set of competencies
- Determine the exam parts and weights
- Provide examples of interview questions related to the competencies
- Consider other logistical issues
  - How many candidates are likely to apply?
  - Is preview of the interview questions prior to the interview allowed?
  - How much testing time allowed per candidate?
  - How many panels needed?

9

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

## Exam Design Matrix



---

**Ocean Lifeguard**

		Part Weights		100%	26%	21%	53%
Competencies	Level	Wt.	98	written	performance	Interview	
Professional/ Technical Expertise	3	25%	23	18	5		
Teamwork	3	19%	19			19	
Physical Skills	3	16%	16		16		
Influencing	3	15%	15			15	
Safety Focus	3	14%	14	7		7	
Oral Communication	3	11%	11			11	

10

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

## Working With the SMEs (Cont'd)



---

2. Review the duty x competency linkage matrix for topic ideas

- What situations, tasks, performance objectives, accomplishments link most closely with the target competencies?

11

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

## Duties x Competencies



---

		Weights					
		16%	25%	14%	11%	15%	19%
Duty Part-of-Job Index	To what extent does the competency differentiate excellent from good performers?						
	2 = Major determinant of superior performance						
	1 = Contributing factor to superior performance						
	q = Needed but not a differentiator						
	Blank/0 = Not a factor in performing the duty						
	34% Ensure safe beach behavior	1	2	2	2	2	1
28% Rescue swimmers	2	2			2	2	
23% Identify and Remove hazards	1	2	2	1		2	
15% Maintain equipment	1	2				1	

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Working With SMEs (Cont'd)



3. Map the question ideas on a topic x competency matrix

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Topic X Competency Matrix



Opportunities to Observe Competency	2	3	1	1
<b>Ocean Lifeguard Interview Design</b>	Safety Focus	Oral Communication	Influencing	Teamwork
Example paying careful attention to ensure others' safety	X	X		
Example persuading another to do something for their own safety even though they don't want to	X	X	X	
Working collaboratively with others to get a job done		X		X

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Interview Question Design



- o **One-to-One:** Each question focuses on a single competency.
  - "Let's discuss "dependability..."
    - What do you think it means to be dependable in a job like this?
    - Why is dependability important?
    - What would you do if your car broke down on your way to work?
- o **One-to-one** questions are better for low complexity jobs (One question – One competency)

15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Interview Question Design



- o **One-to-Many:** Each question evokes two or more competencies
  - “Let’s discuss one of your most challenging projects...”
    - What was the goal and how did you determine it?
    - How did you structure and organize it?
    - Who did you include – how, why?
    - What problems did you encounter and overcome?
    - What would you have done differently?
- o **One-to-many** questions are better for high complexity jobs. (One question – Several competencies)

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Working With SMEs (Cont'd)



5. Use rating guideline
  - use competency definitions and appropriate levels to develop interview questions
6. Final SME review

17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Rating Scale: “Strength of the Evidence”



1. **Limited**
  - Little evidence of the competency was shown or negative examples were demonstrated or suggested. Competency may have broken down under scrutiny or probing.
2. **Moderate**
  - Sufficient evidence of the competency was shown. Responses were adequate in relevancy and clarity. Competency appeared less substantial under scrutiny or probing.
3. **Strong**
  - Good but not exceptional evidence of the competency. Mostly relevant and reasonably substantial responses. Competency held up under scrutiny or probing.
4. **Compelling**
  - Exceptional evidence of the competency. Highly relevant, consistent, and clear responses given. Competency appeared more substantial under scrutiny or probing.

18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Behavioral Consistency



“The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior”  
“If you want to know what a candidate will do on the job, ask for what they have done in the past in similar situations.”

- SOAR
- Straight A’s

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## SOAR



“Describe a time in which you had to...”  
“Please provide an example of when you...”

- Situation
- Objective And Obstacles
- Action
- Result

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Situation



### Situation

- o Ask for an accomplishment related to requirements of the job
- o Structure the question to ask the candidate to:
  - Provide a specific event or situation
  - Provides enough detail for the interviewer to adequately assess the target competency

“Describe a time in which you had to work under highly stressful conditions.” (*Handling Stress*)

21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Objectives and Obstacles



### Objectives and Obstacles

- o Be sure the behavior objective is clear
  - What competencies are you attempting to measure?
  - What was the candidate attempting to do or accomplish?
- o Probe for what made the objective significant
  - Obstacles to overcome (barriers, resistance)
  - Complexities (number of interdependencies)
  - Challenges (resources, risks, novelty, independence, etc)

"Describe a time in which you overcame significant obstacles to producing a report on a tight timeline." (*Action and Results Focus*)

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Action



- o Ask what the candidate actually did
- o Focus on the competencies evident in the accomplishment
- o Probe for:
  - Actions of the candidate related to the objective
  - Focus on what the candidate did -- not the efforts of the team
  - Ask for what they have done instead of would do
  - Why certain actions were taken and others not

"Describe a time in which you had to influence others to negotiate a successful agreement." (*Influencing Others and Negotiating*)

23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Result



- o Ask for the outcome, the result?
  - Objectives accomplished?
  - How measured – how known?
  - How was credit taken/shared?
  - What was learned?
  - What would be done differently?

"Describe a time in which you achieved a high level of customer satisfaction." (*Customer Focus*)

24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

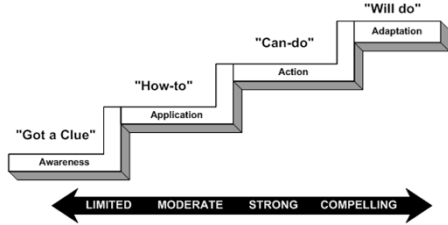
---

---

---



### Straight A's Combination Approach



25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Straight A's Example: Managing Performance



Awareness and Knowledge	Got-a-clue	Have you ever had a job that required managing performance? What was involved? Why is it important?
Application and Situational Judgment	How-to	If you had an employee who was highly skilled but lacking in motivation, what would you do?
Action and Performance	Can-do	Have you ever handled an actual situation similar that one? Please tell us about the situation and what you did?
Adaptation and Insight	Will-do	In that situation, what would you have done if the employee hadn't responded? Describe a situation that didn't work out so well? What did you learn from this experience?

26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Writing competency-based interview questions 1. Provide the Introduction



- Set the stage - Focus
- Establish job-relevancy

"The job in question requires substantial networking to ensure that projects have the support that they need."

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Writing competency-based interview questions**

**2. Structure the Main Question**

---

"Please give us an example of when you were most challenged in building relationships necessary to help a project succeed?"

"Please describe the situation, what you needed to accomplish, what you did, and the result."

**Seek "behavior at the extremes"**

- o Best, hardest, most challenging, greatest obstacles, etc.
  - "What was the most difficult feedback you had to provide an employee?"
  - Describe a time in which you had to give feedback to an employee who was very resistant to your input.

28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Writing competency-based interview questions**

**3. Structure Follow-up Questions**

---

**S** What was the situation? Would you please elaborate a bit more? Fill in some details?

**O** What did you intend to accomplish? What needed to be done? Why was this important?

**A** What did you do? What did you say? What steps did you take?

**R** What was the outcome? How did you know?

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Interview Questions Database (IQD)**

---



- o Interview question item bank
- o Share interview questions with target competencies

30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **IQD- Adding Interview Questions**



- o Add/edit questions and probe questions
- o Identify target competencies, behavior, and context levels

31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **IQD- Searching for Interview Questions**



- o Search for questions by competency, job class, and question ID

32

---

---

---

---

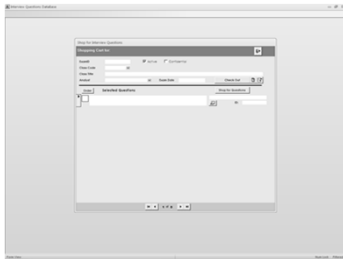
---

---

---

---

### **IQD- Shopping for Interview Questions**



- o Select appropriate questions for exam
- o Print exam

33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

*Questions?*  
*Comments?*

34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---