



GACE® Teacher Leadership Assessment

Library of Examples

Task 5, Step 1: The Needs Assessment

Textbox 5.1.1: Developing the Needs Assessment with Your Colleagues

Below are two examples of written responses to Textbox 5.1.1 as excerpted from the portfolios of two different candidates. The candidate responses were not corrected or changed from what was submitted. One response was scored at the Met/Exceeded Standards Level (3-4), and the other response was scored at the Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level (1-2). This information is being provided for illustrative purposes only. These excerpts are not templates for candidates to use to guarantee a successful score. Rather, they are examples that candidates can use for comparison purposes to see the kinds of evidence that they may need to add to their own work.

Guiding Prompts for Textbox 5.1.1

- How did you facilitate the development and completion of a family and community needs assessment with your colleagues? (The needs assessment for this task may be based on something your district already uses, but the majority of the form should be original, reflecting the input of your colleagues.)
- What were the results of the needs assessment? What is the target area of need identified for this collaboration? What relevant aspect of the educational system will be improved, and how will student learning opportunities be affected?
- How did the collaborative development of the needs assessment help you in identifying opportunities to improve colleagues' collaboration, communication, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning?

Example: Met/Exceeded Standards Level (3-4)

- The school district in which I teach eighth grade English has preached "The Six Pillars of Character" to help our students become young people of good character; however, our school community focuses more on academics and less on building students' character. To our principals credit, at the last "all staff" meeting before the winter break, he asked to start thinking of ways to address our commitment to character building. We were a bit surprised, because it is rarely mentioned, but after I thought about it, I decided it was best to focus on one of the pillars instead of all six, to create a meaningful experience. So I surveyed my eighth grade colleagues to get their impressions of our students and used that to guide which Pillar I would try to address. I designed the survey over the break and gave it to seven teachers when we returned.

Example: Met/Exceeded Standards Level (cont'd.)

- b. The surveys were returned in about two weeks, and, after reading a few responses, a trend emerged: our teachers felt that our students lacked empathy, particularly when it came to those outside their own circles of friends and family. Then, when I read, Jillian's and Ruth's responses, both who were new to our school, I realized that our school community, not just the students, felt a bit unwelcoming to outsiders. They also felt that our students were a bit disconnected from the rest of the world, and that our community was difficult for someone new to feel included. As our classrooms were near each other, I was not surprised to read this, because they'd casually shared their feelings with me. Keeping Jillian's and Ruth's feelings in mind, I thought we might be able to design an activity or function that would allow them to get more involved with families and our broader community. Casually, I mentioned this idea afterschool one day, and both were very interested. We had an afterschool meeting and spoke about how privileged our students are and wondered if this contributed toward a lack of empathy and of a broader, or even global, perspective of other people. We decided to hold an event that would benefit others outside our community, and that our students and community should be involved in the event itself, as well as developing it. This approach covered Jillian's and Ruth's desire to become more familiar with the community, but also addressed an issue that affected many of our students. We thought that doing something to impact a community outside our own could help our students develop a better sense of empathy and realize that they could positively affect people they did not even know, and might likely never meet. Ultimately, we agreed that a fundraiser through which Jillian and Ruth could engage the community by approaching parents and local businesses for donations, would allow our students to work on empathy building by learning about a cause and doing their part to positively impact it. What we needed to determine, however, was a cause, an appropriate fundraiser, getting administrative permission and how to delegate responsibilities
- c. By taking our principal's request to heart, analyzing all of the responses to my questionnaire and hearing Jillian's and Ruth's feedback, the three of us were able to identify and address a number of things. First we knew that our students' character could improve if they were more empathic and socially aware. We also identified two objectives, helping our students grow and helping Jillian and Ruth, two brand new teachers, feel more included and a part our school's community. The three of us agreed that holding an event that brings everyone together would give them both the chance to work with colleagues and students and to create connections with families and community members. However, we felt that we had to create something that would be meaningful to our entire school community, otherwise everyone might feel it is a waste of their time. I, personally, would never have chosen to focus on our developing our student's character and capacity to empathize, if it had not been brought to my attention by Jillian's and Ruth's observations and what we learned from our questionnaires. As 'outsiders,' both tapped into an issue that a lot of family and community members noticed but did not know how to address. This proved to be true, because so many people during and after the fundraiser expressed that it was wonderful to see the students "doing something for others," or "looking outside themselves."

Refer to the Task 5 Rubric and ask yourself:

In the candidate's analysis of the family and community needs assessment, where is there evidence of the following?

- The facilitation and collaboration in developing a family and community needs assessment with colleagues
- The connection between the results of the needs assessment and the targeted area of need
- How the targeted area of need will improve a relevant aspect of the educational system and affect student learning
- How the collaborative development of the needs assessment helped identify opportunities to improve colleagues' collaboration with, communication with, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning

Why is the candidate's response **thorough** or **analytic**?

Example: Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level (1-2)

- a. In 2012, our school system underwent an external review by educational accreditors. During this accreditation process, stakeholders (parents, teachers, and students) from my school analyzed all aspects of our school's performance within five basic categories to determine both strengths and weaknesses. Once official results were released at the district level, we found our school data was comparative to the results of the external review team. Since then, both of my administrators have been working diligently to make amendments to the school improvement plan in an effort to enhance our school's overall effectiveness.
- b. As a member of the school leadership team which is comprised of 11 teachers, 1 Title I family liaison, and 2 administrators, I am involved in multiple areas of school improvement. Based on areas of need indicated by the educational accreditors' visit, our annual Title I Parent Survey was amended for the 2013-2014 school year. We used a document that had been previously used and added questions about our Parent/Student/Teacher Compact, Grade-Level Assessments, and Parent Input in regards to the School Improvement Plan. Per parent surveys, 20% felt a need for greater involvement in reviewing and revising the school improvement plan. This was confirmed by all stakeholders scoring this indicator a Level 2 at our educational accreditors' self-assessment review. Per our educational accreditors' self-assessment review, the one of the self-assessment team identified the need to ensure school-level data is consistency reported across all grade levels and to all stakeholders with explanations of different types of assessments.
- c. My colleagues along with the Title I family liaison, wanted to ensure that parents are not only aware of school-related events but also parent conferences, school improvement plan review meetings, and school-level assessment data. For the last several years, communication between both the school and parents is an area of need. Although grade-level newsletters and weekly school related flyers are sent home, there remains a need for face-to-face conversations, technology-driven notifications, and notice of meetings that involve all stakeholders concerning a review of school improvement plan provides opportunities to make parent conferences more meaningful, revise Title I Parent/Student/Teacher Compacts, and involve parent stakeholders in school improvement meetings.

Refer to the Task 5 Rubric and ask yourself:

In the candidate's analysis of the family and community needs assessment, where is there evidence of the following?

- The facilitation and collaboration in developing a family and community needs assessment with colleagues
- The connection between the results of the needs assessment and the targeted area of need
- How the targeted area of need will improve a relevant aspect of the educational system and affect student learning
- How the collaborative development of the needs assessment helped identify opportunities to improve colleagues' collaboration with, communication with, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning

Why is the candidate's response ***unclear*** and ***loosely connected***?

Suggestions for Using These Examples

After writing your own rough draft response to the guiding prompts, ask the question, "Which parts of these examples are closest to what I have written?" Then read the 4 levels of the matching rubric (labeled with the textbox number) and decide which best matches your response. Use this information as you revise your own written commentary.

Lastly, using your work and/or these examples as reference, consider what you believe would be appropriate artifacts for this textbox.