Responsive Classroom Educator Certification Assignments
Middle School Applicants

Assignment 1: Use *Assessment Tool for Middle School Teachers* to self-assess your practice in all components of *Responsive Classroom*. Scores must average 4.0 or higher to qualify for certification. You will be required to submit a completed **score-tracking sheet** and completed post-assessment **reflection pages** (included in this packet) for each practice from the Assessment Tool. Your responses to the questions should accurately reflect your continued growth plan.

Assignment 2: Engaging Academic Lesson
- Video of an engaging academic lesson you are teaching students:
  - Video length should be 20-30 minutes. **Note:** The reviewers will not score video after 30 minutes.
  - Engaging academic lesson should be content focused on and aligned to an objective. (Please note: Responsive Advisory meetings do not meet the criteria for this assignment.)
  - Use the Engaging Academics Video Checklist included in this packet.
- Lesson plan for the academic lesson video:
  - Use the Academic Lesson Planning Sheet included in this packet.
- Written reflection of video, focusing on the Four Domains of *Responsive Classroom*: Positive Community, Effective Management, Engaging Academics, and Developmentally Responsive Teaching (3-5 pages).
  - Use the Academic Lesson Reflection Guide included in this packet.

Assignment 3: Student Impact Essay (3-5 pages)
- Explain how implementing *Responsive Classroom* practices has positively impacted your students' growth in both academic and social-emotional skills:
  - Select at least **two** academic competencies and at least **two** social and emotional competencies
  - Use the Student Impact Essay Guide included in this packet.

Assignment 4: Provide two letters of recommendation
- One letter from your professional supervisor commenting on your qualities as an effective teacher (i.e., relationship to children, overall management and organization of class, approaches to instruction); approach to professional development (i.e., ability to be reflective about own teaching and response to outside feedback); and proficiency in *Responsive Classroom* implementation.
- One letter from a colleague who can speak to your qualities as an effective teacher (i.e., relationship to children, overall management and organization of class, approaches to instruction); and demonstration of *Responsive Classroom* practices and strategies. The colleague you choose may not be another applicant for the RC Certification Program.
- **Letters of recommendations should be submitted here:** certification@responsiveclassroom.org

Assignment 5: Provide a current resume

Responsive Classroom Assessment Tool for Middle School Teachers Score Tracking Sheet

Practice: Interactive Modeling	
IM 1	
IM 2	
IM 3	
IM 4	
IM 5	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Responsive Advisory Meeting	
RAM 1	
RAM 2	
RAM 3	
RAM 4	
RAM 5	
RAM 6	
RAM 7	
RAM 8	
RAM 9	
RAM 10	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Teacher Language	
TL 1	
TL 2	
TL 3	
TL 4	
TL 5	
TL 6	
TL 7	
TL 8	
TL 9	
TL 10	
TL 11	
TL 12	
TL 13	
TL 14	
TL 15	
TL 16	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Brain Breaks	
BB 1	
BB 2	
BB 3	
BB 4	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Small Group Learning	
SGL 1	
SGL 2	
SGL 3	
SGL 4	
SGL 5	
SGL 6	
SGL 7	
SGL 8	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Responding to Misbehavior	
RtM 1	
RtM 2	
RtM 3	
RtM 4	
RtM 5	
RtM 6	
RtM 7	
RtM 8	
RtM 9	
RtM 10	
RtM 11	
RtM 12	
RtM 13	
RtM 14	
RtM 15	
RtM 16	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Interactive Learning Structures	
ILS 1	
ILS 2	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Investing Students in the Rules	
ISitR 1	
ISitR 2	
ISitR 3	
ISitR 4	
ISitR 5	
ISitR 6	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Active Teaching	
AT 1	
AT 2	
AT 3	
AT 4	
AT 5	
AT 6	
AT 7	
AT 8	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Problem Solving Conference	
PSC 1	
PSC 2	
PSC 3	
PSC 4	
PSC 5	
PSC 6	
PSC 7	
PSC 8	
PSC 9	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Student Practice	
SP 1	
SP 2	
SP 3	
SP 4	
SP 5	
Total	
Average	

Practice: Closing of the Day	
CotD 1	
CotD 2	
CotD 3	
Total	
Average	

Interactive Modeling Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with Interactive Modeling? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of Interactive Modeling.

5. Create a SMART goal for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Responsive Advisory Meeting Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with Responsive Advisory Meeting? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the Strategies and Resources section of the Assessment Tool for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of Responsive Advisory Meeting.

5. Create a SMART goal for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Teacher Language Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with Teacher Language? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of teacher language.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Brain Breaks Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with brain breaks? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of brain breaks.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Small Group Learning Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with small group learning? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of small group learning.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Interactive Learning Structures Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with interactive learning structures? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of interactive learning structures.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Investing Students in the Rules Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with investing students in the rules? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of investing students in the rules.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Responding to Misbehavior Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with responding to misbehavior? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of responding to misbehavior.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Active Teaching Post-Assessment Reflection
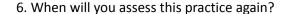
Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with active teaching? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of active teaching.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Student Practice Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress:
average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with student practice? What has contributed to your
   success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and
   Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of student
   practice.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Problem Solving Conferences Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with problem solving conferences? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of problem solving conferences.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Closing of the Day Post-Assessment Reflection

Average Score _____ Area for improvement: average = less than 3.0 Good progress: average = 3.0-3.9 Strength Area: average = 4.0 or more

1. What is an area of particular strength with closing of the day? What has contributed to your success?

2. What would you identify as areas for improvement?

3. Prioritize these areas for improvement in order of most importance to you.

4. For your most important area, create a SMART goal. See suggestions in the following Strategies and Resources section for specific ideas about ways to work on one or more components of closing of the day.

5. Create SMART goals for your other priority areas.

6. When will you assess this practice again?

Engaging Academic Lesson Planning Sheet

Refer to your *Responsive Classroom* Middle School Course Resource Book for detailed information and strategies as you plan your engaging academic lesson. The planning sheet below should guide your lesson plan, which should be created in a separate document.

Elements of Engagement	**Four Domains**	**Students' Needs**
☐ Active ☐ Interactive ☐ Appropriately challenging ☐ Purposeful ☐ Connected to strengths/interests ☐ Provides autonomy/choice	☐ Positive Community ☐ Effective Management ☐ Engaging Academics ☐ Developmentally Responsive Teaching	☐ Belonging ☐ Significance ☐ Fun

Grade Level: _____ **Subject Area**: _____

Number of students in class and present in lesson: _____

Estimated length of lesson: _____ **Date lesson will be conducted**: _____

Objective/Learning Goal(s): *What will students be able to do as a result of this lesson?*
- Academic Learning Goals
- Social-Emotional Learning Goals

Outline/Sequence of Lesson: *Using bullet points to outline the sequence of the lesson is acceptable. Be sure to include enough detail to provide a clear understanding of what will occur in the lesson and specific actions being used to address the Four Domains.*
- Opening
- Body
- Closing

Elements of Engaging Academics: *Identify a minimum of 3 of the following elements of engaging academics that will be present in the lesson and describe what the observable indicators are.* • Active
- Interactive
- Appropriately challenging
- Purposeful
- Connected to strengths and interests
- Provides autonomy/choice

Students' Needs: *Explain where and how this lesson will meet the students' needs.*
- Belonging
- Significance
- Fun

Assessment: *How will you know what students have gained?*

![Responsive Classroom®]

Engaging Academic Video Checklist

	The video submission has clear audio.
	All students are visible at times during the lesson.
	The lesson is content-focused and addresses academic and social-emotional objective(s).
	The video is aligned with the lesson plan.
	The video illustrates elements of engagement, Four Domains, and student needs being met.
	The lesson is between 20 and 30 minutes long. ***Note: The reviewers will not score video after 30 minutes.*** Video can be edited to fit within the 20-30 minute limit. If edited, elaborate on the edits below. *Example: The lesson was 50 minutes, with group work lasting 25 minutes. The video was edited to show 5 minutes of group work time to highlight the social-emotional and academic skills being practiced and to meet the length requirement.*
	The video demonstrates a high level of implementation of *Responsive Classroom* teaching practices and strategies.

Engaging Academic Lesson Reflection Guide

Review the academic lesson video and create a **3-5 page** written reflection explaining how the lesson incorporated the following:

Elements of Engagement	Four Domains	Students' Needs
● Active ● Interactive ● Appropriately challenging ● Purposeful ● Connected to strengths/interests ● Provides autonomy/choice	● Positive Community ● Effective Management ● Engaging Academics ● Developmentally Responsive Teaching	● Belonging ● Significance ● Fun

Use the following prompts to guide your reflection:

- What went well in this lesson? What were some strengths of your teaching (RC practices used, management, presentation, delivery) as you reflect on this particular lesson?

- What was a time during the lesson that students were most engaged? What might be some reasons this piece led to higher engagement for your students than other points in the lesson? Challenge yourself to cite specific characteristics of Engaging Academics in your rationale by identifying elements that were contributing to students' superior engagement.

- How did you address each of the Four Domains in this academic lesson? Share specific examples from the lesson that illustrate each of the domains.

- What were examples of evidence that students' needs for belonging, significance, and fun were met during this lesson?

- Reflecting on this lesson, what changes would you make to enhance each of the Four Domains? What are some action steps you'll take to implement these reflections in future teaching opportunities?

Student Impact Essay Guide

This essay should be **3-5 pages** in length. Use 12-point Times Roman font. Double space with 1" margins on all sides.

Implementing *Responsive Classroom* practices with high fidelity makes learning lively and engaging and helps students to build academic and social-emotional (A+SEL) skills that yield [positive student](#) [outcomes](#); proximal, intermediate, and long-term.

Show how implementation of the *Responsive Classroom* philosophy and practices has positively impacted student development of A+SEL skills. Include in at least **two** academic competencies and at least **two** social-emotional competencies specific examples of how students exemplified success in A+SEL and what evidence of growth was observed for each of these skills. The essay should focus on student growth, and the vignettes used to describe that growth can combine A+SEL skills from throughout the school year.

Academic Competencies:

  • **Academic Mindset:** Four self-perceptions influence a student's academic mindset: 1) I belong in this academic community; 2) my effort improves my performance; 3) I can succeed at this work; and 4) I see value in this work.
  • **Academic Perseverance:** A student's tendency to complete assignments in a timely and thorough manner and to the best of their ability, despite distractions, obstacles, or level of challenge.
  • **Learning Strategies:** Techniques, processes, and tactics a student uses to 1) learn, think, remember, and recall, 2) monitor their own comprehension and growth, 3) self-correct when they are confused or have an error in thinking, and 4) set and achieve goals and manage their time effectively.
  • **Academic Behaviors:** The ways in which students conduct themselves that support their success in school, including such things as regular attendance, arriving ready to work, paying attention, participating in instructional activities and class discussions, and devoting out of school time to studying and completing assignments and projects.

Social-Emotional Competencies:

  ● **Cooperation:** Students' ability to establish new relationships, maintain positive relationships and friendships, avoid social isolation, resolve conflicts, accept differences, be a contributing member of the classroom and school community, and work productively and collaboratively with others.
  ● **Assertiveness:** Students' ability to take initiative, stand up for their ideas without hurting or negating others, seek help, succeed at a challenging task, and recognize their individual self as separate from the circumstances or conditions they're in.
  ● **Responsibility:** Students' ability to motivate themselves to take action and follow through on expectations; to define a problem, consider the consequences, and choose a positive solution.
  ● **Empathy:** Students ability to "see into" (recognize, understand) another's state of mind or emotions and be receptive to new ideas and perspectives; to appreciate and value differences and diversity in others; to have concern for others' welfare, even when it doesn't benefit or may come at a cost to one's self.

- **Self-Control:** Students' ability to recognize and regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to be successful in the moment and remain on a successful trajectory.

The focus of this essay should be on the trajectory of growth and the positive impacts that your use of *Responsive Classroom* strategies and practices had on your students' development of the academic and social-emotional competencies outlined above.Consider using the graphic organizer below to help **plan** your essay with at least **two** specific examples from academic competencies and at least **two** specific examples from social and emotional competencies that highlight positive student impact and growth . You can also read excerpts of exemplar Student Impact Essays from previous applicants to guide you as you craft your own essay.

	Challenges my student(s) faced	What I did to address the challenges	Positive outcomes I observed
	Specific behaviors I saw/heard that impeded the social, emotional, and/or academic growth in students individually and/or of our learning community overall	Responsive Classroom *strategies and practices I implemented to support positive change in students' actions and thinking*	*Specific results and changes to student behavior that had a positive social, emotional, and/or academic impact on students individually and/or on our learning community overall*
Cooperation			
Assertiveness			
Responsibility			
Empathy			
Self-Control			
Academic Mindset			
Academic Perseverance			
Learning Strategies			
Academic Behaviors			

Exemplar Student Impact Essay submissions
2021 RCP Exemplars for Assignment 3 FINAL

Example 1:

"This year I have a student who is known around the school. At the beginning of the year he would shout out during lessons, yell at other students if he disagreed, bully them into following his ideas, and treat teachers and students with disrespect (not responding, lying, eye rolls, breaths of exasperation). I knew that building a strong community based on Hopes and Dreams, clear and consistent rules, and positive teacher language when redirecting misbehaviours would be essential to his success. He is extremely bright and a quick finisher, so engaging academics was an essential component to my success with practices.

"By providing rigorous academic work that he valued and creating a positive community, he has become a leader in our class. Building compassion and empathy without assuming he is to blame has been essential. Using the strategies of break it- fix it, loss of privilege, and time-out this student has become more accountable than ever for his actions because the consequence is always logical. He is beginning to accept responsibility for his actions (with prompts) and students have complimented him on improving his behaviour and staying on task (academic behaviours). He is managing his facial reactions in more respectful ways (no eye rolling or furrowed brows when redirected) and takes big breaths when he wants to interrupt his peer's ideas; waiting for them to finish speaking before responding. In addition, he has been excited from a weekly student group with the counselor and been able to stay in the classroom when we have substitute teachers; previously he had to work in the office due to his disrespectful behaviour. Our counsellor has commented that this has been his best year yet.

"Responding to misbehaviour has positively impacted this specific student and many others and it is evident in our classroom meeting when other students compliment him on being 'better behaved now'. He has more friends and his peers feel more confident when speaking with him (previously some students were fearful). Other students have noticed that he has the self-control to cooperate with them during partnerships or group work and listens to their ideas sometimes."

Example 2:

"Persevering through challenges can be overwhelming for students whose schooling has not met their emotional and academic needs. They lack trust and don't want to bring attention to themselves. My students come to school with many strategies to leave the classroom when things become difficult. It is up to me to provide resources and strategies so that each student has tools to navigate these challenging situations. Guided Discovery and Interactive Modeling are two Responsive Classroom techniques that I have used to assist my students to persevere through challenges. As my students explore and practice new learning challenges, I can help them refer back to what we have learned together. My teacher language comes into play again, "I noticed that you used the standing desk in order to stay focused. You completed your work and asked questions to help your understanding." As I witnessed my students staying in the classroom more often, referring to tools and strategies independently or with little teacher guidance, regaining composure more quickly, then I knew that they were making positive progress persevering."

Example 3:

"All of the students coming into fifth grade knew L, but they didn't know the role they needed to play in his success. The key to cultivating a community that included L, rather than just tolerating him, was morning meeting. We began with very low-risk greetings and partner shares. I have always used interactive modeling to introduce partner shares, but this year I included a model demonstrating how to interact if your partner was ready to listen, but not yet ready to contribute. How can we show we are interested and care for the speaker without using words? How can we be sure to give our partner chances to share so he will feel welcome to share when the time is right?

"A strong sense of empathy began to bloom in our classroom. Students were internalizing the message that L wanted to share and be a significant member of our classroom, that he wanted to succeed, and that it was up to us to offer him the patient practice and environment to succeed. This mindset carried over into social cooperation on the playground and at lunch. L began to be chosen for teams in gym class and included in learning activities without hesitation. He began to share at morning meeting, a word at a time at first, and then during circle shares with all eyes on him. We stayed away from activities that involve contact for several weeks and later gave L the option to participate in another way when the parameters of the activity were beyond his current comfort level. This is the beauty of an inclusive classroom. Every student witnesses incremental gains, first in others, and then in themselves. Everyone has the opportunity to develop a growth mindset and apply it to his or her own social and academic challenges. Academic perseverance develops from the belief that we can all improve with practice and support."