**Please prepare this assignment according to the guidelines found in the APA. Be sure to include these questions in a 550-700 word essay:**

1. Evaluate and discuss the case relative to each of the following concepts: client/social worker boundaries, roles, supra systems, interface, inputs, outputs, structures, and feedback.
2. Give examples from the case for three of these elements.
3. What interventions from the strengths perspective would you use to assist the family?

**Case Example**

Imagine that you are a parent aide working within a family preservation program. Family preservation includes a set of services provided to families who are identified as at risk of having their children removed by Child Protective Services as a result of child maltreatment. When investigators respond to hot line calls to assess child abuse and neglect, they determine levels of risk. Some children are removed from their parents and placed in foster care when it is determined that the children are at imminent risk of harm in their current homes. However, when the risk is low and families can be maintained intact through the provision of tangible and emotional support, family preservation services are offered for enhancing the functioning of the family, allowing the children to remain within their homes. Family preservation commonly includes case management, counseling, parent education, and tangible support, such as day care or financial aid. A parent aide is a professional assigned to provide parent education in the home. Parent aides often visit parents and their children two to three times a week to check on the children and provide parenting education and assistance to parents. The Ramirez family includes Maria, the grandmother; her adult daughter, Luisa; and Luisa’s three children: Jorge (age 10), Joe (age 8), and Berta (age 4). In recent weeks, the staff members at Berta’s day care facility have noticed that Berta was showing up for preschool more tired, unkempt, and hungry than in the past. One day, Berta seems upset after her mother drops her off. When staff members speak with Berta, the young girl says, “Mom is always mad. Mom grabbed me!” The staff members notice bruises on Berta’s arms, and being mandated child abuse reporters, they report these observations to the child abuse hot line. An investigator comes, speaks with Berta, and conducts an investigation regarding this situation in the home. Luisa states that her mother Maria has been recently diagnosed with lung cancer and is receiving radiation and chemotherapy treatments. As a result, Maria has lost her job and is no longer financially contributing to the family. Luisa is responsible for caring for her mother while managing the financial and other household responsibilities. She has picked up extra hours at the bakery where she works, but she is concerned that she may not be able to make her rent this month. Between work and her care giving responsibilities, Luisa feels overwhelmed and she has no energy for her three children. When speaking with the investigator, Luisa acknowledges that she may be taking her stress out on her children. Despite the stress of this situation, the investigator does not determine the children to be at immediate risk of harm. The investigator believes the family can remain intact if support is provided to relieve some of the burden Luisa is carrying. As a result, the

Ramirez family is referred to family preservation services. As the parent aide assigned to this case, you decide to adopt a strengths perspective when working with the Ramirez family. How might you approach this case that would demonstrate strengths-based principles? What questions might you ask to implement the strengths perspective? What are some internal and external strengths that you observe in this case example? How might these strengths be used to help address the struggles this family is facing? A demonstration of a strengths perspective is apparent within your early thoughts about what is happening in this case even as you travel to Luisa’s apartment for the first home visit. Adopting the strengths perspective means you approach this case with hope. Although this situation may seem overwhelming, strengths-based practitioners believe in the capacity for growth. As you drive up to this home, you are hopeful about the possibilities rather than prematurely discouraged about the circumstances. When you enter the apartment, you notice details about the small two-bedroom unit. The family room consists of scattered toys and piles of laundry. Rather than seeing this disarray as suggestive of Luisa’s poor organization and ineffective parenting, you are not surprised that a mother of three who is care giving for her own parent has not prioritized straightening the home before your visit. As you sit down to meet Luisa, you see a tired and distressed woman in her 30s. She becomes tearful when speaking about her mother. Her affection for her mother is clear, and her sense of responsibility to care for Maria is unquestionable. Luisa then begins to speak about her children and becomes more tearful when she acknowledges she is not being the parent she wants to be. You listen to these concerns, demonstrating understanding and empathy. As a break in this content arises, you have a choice about how to direct the conversation. At this point, rather than drawing out the ways in which Luisa feels inadequate, you choose to ask an exceptions question: “I understand things are really tough right now with the kids. I was curious, though, if you could think about a time when you were happy with the way things were going with the kids?” Luisa thinks about the question and begins to smile for the first time during your talk. She recounts how things were before Maria became sick. Although your assessment will include details about Luisa’s stress and her concerns about her current parenting, a strengths-based assessment will also include information gathered through this question. This exceptions question allows you to hear about Luisa’s clear commitment to her children. She talks about how she loves to cook for them. She was just beginning to teach Berta how to prepare some traditional Mexican food, an activity Luisa shared with her own mother and remembers fondly. This was an important activity Berta and Luisa both greatly enjoyed, but it has ceased since Maria became sick. Another important part of your assessment is to identify Luisa’s internal and external strengths. Luisa’s commitment to family, her cultural identity, and the insight she demonstrates when acknowledging her stress is being taken out on the kids are all important internal strengths. To understand more about her external strengths, you ask about neighbors, extended family, and other potential areas of support. Through this discussion, you find out that Luisa is Catholic and was previously actively involved in her local parish. However, since Maria became sick, the family has not been attending services. Understanding this family is connected to a faith community opens the potential for support. Many faith communities offer care to

people like Luisa who are facing difficult times. Reconnecting Luisa and her family with their church may be one way of using external strengths to support the family. As the conversation progresses, you also discover that Luisa has three sisters. These sisters live out of town. However, these relationships may represent other areas of support to be explored. The conversation continues, and other relationships and organizations, including the staff at Berta’s day care, are identified that may be helpful. All are important parts of a strengths assessment. Toward the end of this first meeting, you express empathy to Luisa for the challenges she is facing. You acknowledge how difficult it must be to deal with the emotional and financial burdens of care giving for Maria and her three children. While acknowledging these challenges, you are careful to also highlight Luisa’s commitment to her family. You point out Luisa’s insight, as well as the affection she clearly demonstrates for her mother and children. Toward the end of this conversation, there may be an opportunity for early goal setting. You have some thoughts about things that might help Luisa, including reconnecting with her church, receiving some financial support, and pursuing the opportunity for emotional support provided through counseling. However, before asserting these ideas you demonstrate a collaborative relationship by asking Luisa what she sees as most helpful. Having clients identify their goals is essential to strengths-based practice, even in mandated services.

**Reference:**

Langer, Carol L., and Lietz, Cynthia. Applying Theory to Generalist Social Work Practice (1). Somerset, US: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 15 April 2017.