

California State University San Marcos
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
EDUC 350 Foundations of Teaching as a Profession
Guidelines for Field Experience & Classroom Observation Reports

EDUC 350 requires 45 hours of field experience in public schools. *You cannot pass the course without completing this requirement.*

You must observe in each of the following educational settings at least once:

1. elementary school classroom (K-6)
2. middle school classroom (6-8)
3. high school classroom (9-12)
4. special setting (e.g., sheltered instruction/SDAIE, English language development, primary language classroom, special education, gifted education, charter schools, alternative education, adult/continuation school, court schools)

You are encouraged to observe in multiple school districts and schools with a range of socio-economic contexts, multilingual/cultural populations, etc.

Choose the locations of your field experience early and carefully. Make copies of the introduction letter, as you will meet with more than one principal. Call ahead and ask to speak to the principal or the person designated to assist observers. Explain any special settings that you would like to observe, and/or inquire about the special settings at that school site (“What types of special programs or classes might I be able to observe at your school--English Language Development, classrooms for students with special learning needs, etc.”). However, be open to whatever classes the school offers you for observation. Stay at the site for as long as you are able. Ask if you can see some different settings if you are at the school for an extended period (e.g., morning in first grade, afternoon in fourth grade).

Request to waive observation hours: If you have recent, significant experience with students in public school settings, you may request to waive up to 20 of the 45 hours of field observations. Should the request be granted, you will still need to observe in the variety of settings described above. Examples of roles that might qualify for a waiver are: tutor, substitute teacher, teacher aide, parent volunteer, Casey Foundation participant, school aide. To request a waiver, complete the form in this packet (page 7) and submit it to your instructor with supporting documentation no later than the third week of the semester.

Classroom Observation Reports

Choose five of your classroom observations to write up for credit. These reports will include one from each of the four required settings (Elementary, Middle, High, Special Setting) plus one more from the setting of your choice. These will be due throughout the semester (see syllabus for dates). Each classroom observation report will follow the format below and will be approximately two pages in length, single-spaced (approximately 1,000 words). Respect the confidentiality of the students and teachers by using fictitious names for persons in your entries.

Classroom Observation Report Template

Name:

Required Setting (Elementary, Middle, High, Special):

Context:

- Day of the Week/Date/Time
- School Name/District
- Type of classroom (grade/subject/special program)
- Number of teachers and assistants/Number of students
- Describe the demographic characteristics of this school or classroom (gender, race/ethnicity, languages, ability...)

Overview/Description of Class Session: Describe what you saw chronologically. List the step-by-step activities in which the teacher and students were engaged. Include relevant information about focus areas such as classroom diversity, room arrangement, behavior management strategies, evaluation methods (see list on pp. 4-5 of this packet).

Analysis of Observation: Name 1-2 significant events and explain why you chose them for analysis. Analyze the observation and make reference to what you have learned/read in this course (e.g., Grant & Gillette, 2006, p. #).

Personal Impact: Articulate how this observation personally impacted your thinking about teaching, learning, and schooling. How will this observation inform your career as a teacher and why?

Question(s): Conclude with at least one unanswered question you have as a result of this observation.

FOCUS AREAS FOR EDUC 350 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS AND REPORTS

The following is a list of areas to guide you through your actual field experience. You may wish to focus on one or more of these areas during observations. Some areas will require you to obtain information from the teachers and some will be evident through the observation process.

Room arrangement (the physical lay-out of the room: does it support or get in the way of instruction? do the students move around the room for different phases of instruction?).

Classroom rules and procedures (are rules posted? who generated the rules? do you see them enforced consistently? do students seem to know what the teacher expects? has the teacher made his/her "invisible" expectations visible to the students?).

Organizing student work (how do students submit finished work? how does the teacher return work? are there provisions for redoing/resubmitting work? what provisions are in place for students who are absent?).

Behavior management strategies (how does the teacher get compliance from the students in the area of acceptable behavior? do students understand expectations? is the teacher consistent in attending to students' behavior?).

Planning for instruction (is there evidence of lesson planning? does the teacher do long range and short range lesson planning? are instructional materials readily available?).

Conducting instruction (does the teacher make provisions for active learning? how does the teacher view his/her role during instruction? do all students have a chance to participate? what materials were used in the course of the lesson? what variety of instructional approaches are used? does the teacher use wait time and prompting responses to increase involvement? is cooperative learning in evidence?).

Managing small groups (are there any small group instructional sections? how are students selected for small groups [assigned/choice; heterogeneous/homogeneous]? are the small groups permanent or flexible? what are the students doing who are not involved with the teacher?).

Classroom diversity (how diverse are the students—in ability, learning styles, ethnicity, linguistic background, socioeconomic status? how does the teacher attend to differences among the students? how does the teacher adapt instruction for students with special needs, or for English learners ["sheltered instruction"]?).

Students (how do you think students perceive their roles as learners in the room? what opportunities do they have for interactions with each other? do interests of learners help guide instruction? are students active participants in the learning process?).

Communication skills (comment on the clarity of instructions. do students understand what they are to do when a sequence of instructions are given? does the teacher depend only on verbal communication skills or are there also visual prompts to accompany verbal instructions? what does the teacher's non-verbal communication indicate [body language etc.]?)

Evaluating student progress (how does the teacher know if objectives for instruction have been met? does the teacher ask for response to oral or written questions during the lesson and/or observe students during the lesson? what informal documentation is maintained? what “counts” for grading purposes: worksheets, homework, tests, portfolios, presentations, projects? does the teacher “teach to the test,” whether teacher-designed or standardized?)

Flexibility (what evidence of flexibility do you see in the teacher's behavior and the learning environment? do you see evidence of any "teachable moments" [unplanned events being turned into effective learning experiences with students]? does the teacher use student remarks or interest to "reroute" or enhance a planned lesson?).

Name: _____

**EDUC 350 – Foundations of Teaching as a Profession
Classroom Observation Report Summary**

Submit this summary as directed by your instructor (as a cover sheet each time you submit your field observation reports or on a given due date).

Obs. #	Date	Grade level	Subject field or special setting
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1

2

3

4

5

Remember!!

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- middle school classroom (6-8)
- high school classroom (9-12)
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You will complete a fifth report on the setting of your choice.

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Request to Waive Observation Hours-EDUC 350

EDUC 350 Section # _____ Semester/Yr: _____ Instructor: _____

Name ID#

I request a waiver for the following experience in public schools:

- Tutor
- Substitute teacher
- Teacher aide
- Parent volunteer
- School aide
- Casey Foundation participant
- Other (describe): _____

The experience took place as follows:

School: _____

District: _____

Dates: _____

No. of hours in this experience: _____

Attach the following to this request:

1. Verification of the experience (e.g., a letter from supervisor/teacher, timesheet).
2. Your reflection on the experience (1-2 pages typewritten). Describe the experience and convey what you learned from the experience that will help you to be an effective teacher candidate.

Do not write below this line.

 Approved Number of hours to be waived (20 max): _____

Denied Reason for denial: _____

Instructor Signature

Date