

**UC Santa Cruz  
Education 200  
Beginning Student Teaching  
Observation Guide**

Educators must obtain and develop an astonishing range of skills to work successfully with their students. An effective teacher makes this complicated process appear seamless. One essential aspect of educating students is the ability to sense or to see what is behind a student's words or present situation. A teacher must not only be able to internalize all the pieces necessary to craft an effective learning environment but must also develop a sensitivity to really hear the concerns of a student or parent. This ability to correctly read a situation has been referred to as "inseeing". Think of inseeing as becoming fluent in the often unspoken language of the classroom. It is a sense of what is the correct way to proceed in a specific situation or a way of knowing how to have a conversation with a defeated child that will result in empowerment. It is also the ability to walk into a classroom and assess the learning environment. This assignment is an ongoing exercise to begin to develop this new sense of "inseeing" as an educator.

We would like to take a moment to welcome you to our cohorts and to say hello. As your supervisors we are here to support and to guide you through the exciting and challenging process of your student teaching. Your first school placement is the start of our work together. Our goal for you in this placement is to learn as much as you can about the classroom itself. This assignment is the first step in this sometimes-daunting endeavor. It is a set of guided observations designed to assist you in the development of "inseeing". Please record your detailed observations and reflections daily in an 8 1/2 x 11 " notebook responding to the prompts we have provided. Using a Cornell note pattern, write your observations on the front of each page ( the right side) and your thoughts, questions, and analyses on the opposing page (left side). As these entries will be shared and discussed in cohort, it would be wise to organize your notebook based on the given categories A-E. You will want to label and date your entries for easy referral. *Lastly, use the bulk of your classroom time interacting with students and the CT. You can jot your observations at the end of each day.*

### **A. First Days**

You will be observing during the first days of the new school year as your UCSC course schedule allows. There are numerous critical aspects of the class community that are built and put into place during these first couple weeks of school. Each educator proceeds in his or her own way, but we consider that this time period encompasses at least the first two to three weeks of the school year. Please consider and respond to the following prompts.

**Students' Names and Introductions:**

How does the teacher introduce her/himself? We suggest that you request that you are introduced as Ms. or Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. How do the students learn each other's names? How does the teacher learn the students' names?

**Routines:**

Take some time to notice the routines of the classroom. What is the daily schedule? What are the things that happen every day? How does/did the cooperating teacher teach the students what to do? How well do the students follow routines? What works, what doesn't seem to work, and why or why not? How can you assist the students in learning/following

the routines?

**Community Building:**

Describe the activities that are done with the students in your classroom to build a sense of community and positive relationships. This may be very subtle or seem completely absent at first. How does your CT get to know who his/her students are?

**Schedules and Agendas:**

What is the daily and weekly schedule? How are the students informed of schedules and agendas? Describe the recess and lunch schedules. Get a copy of the school bell schedule for yourself and for your supervisor.

**Student Movement Patterns:**

What procedures are in place for sharpening pencils, drinking water, going to the bathroom, sending students to the office/nurse? How do individuals enter/exit the room? Groups?

**Your Involvement:**

Soon you will be moving from an observer in your classroom to an active participant. Explore the possibilities of what you can do to involve yourself in this classroom.

**B. Room Observations**

**Walls:**

Draw a picture of each classroom wall that includes everything on them. What assumptions can you make about the teacher's intent for her class by looking at how the walls are covered? What purpose do the walls serve? What impressions do they make to new arrivals? What long-range effect might they have? How do students respond to or interact with the walls?

**Classroom Resources:**

Where are the basic supplies kept? (pencils, paper, scissors, rulers, markers etc) How does the teacher insure the readiness of her teaching materials? Who has access to supplies in the classroom? How are they distributed, collected, organized?

**Classroom Library:**

What types of books are in the classroom library? (fiction, non-fiction, culturally diverse etc) How are the students encouraged to use them? When are the books available to students?

**Seating:**

Draw a map of the seating arrangement including the teacher's area. Why do you suppose the teacher selected this arrangement? What are the advantages for the teacher? ...for the students?

**Homework:**

What procedures exist for homework? What are the expectations? How much is assigned? How often? How is it monitored?

**Class Rules:**

How are classroom rules/consequences developed? What are they called? How do students access the rules? What are the rules/consequences?

## C. School Culture

### **Personnel-Who's who in your school?**

It's important to introduce yourself and establish the beginning of new collegial friendships and professional relationships. Find out who works at your school and what their job entails. In your notebook, keep a list of people you meet and their position, for future reference.

1. Principal
2. School Secretary and all classified staff
3. Maintenance crew on campus
4. All staff teachers and resource personnel
5. Counselor
6. Psychologist
7. Librarian
8. Art/Music/P.E. teachers
9. Volunteer parents that are often on campus
10. Special program personnel/Life Lab-etc.
11. District personnel whenever possible
12. Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Professional attire:**

Look around at all the teachers in the school and dress appropriately for a professional. If in doubt don't wear it. Become familiar with the students' dress code at your school.

### **Adults in the Classroom:**

Observe and make a list of all the adults that are working in the classroom and describe their roles.

Record in your notebook, when and how often they come to the classroom? What services do they

provide and where can you find them if you need them?

1. Team teachers
2. Parent Volunteers
3. Resource teachers (resource teacher, speech, ELD, APE, etc.)
4. Individual student aide
5. Guest speaker
6. Visitors
7. Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **School Layout:**

First find the school office and introduce yourself. See if they have a school map, if not make a sketch of the school for your reference. The sooner you get to know the people and where things are on campus, the more comfortable you will feel. Put a labeled map or your sketch in your observation notebook.

Locate the following places:

School office

Principal's office  
Your classroom and other classrooms  
Student and adult restrooms  
Faculty workroom  
Faculty lunchroom  
Library  
Bookroom or resource area  
Cafeteria or multipurpose room  
Maintenance-custodian's office  
Special areas-Life Lab etc.  
Designated areas on campus that are off limits to students  
Parking  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D. Students and Families**

##### **Students:**

As you get to know the students in your classroom whom do you notice right away? Why does this individual stand out to you?

##### **Special Needs Students:**

Who are the special needs students in your placement classroom? What are their needs? How are their needs being met? Who helps them? What support services are they entitled to, if any? Write down some observations of these students. How can you help them while you are there?

##### **Support Services:**

Who are the people at your placement school that provide support services to the students (resource teacher, speech teacher, ELD, APE, psychologist, counselor, etc...)? What are their names? What services do they provide? Where can you find them if you need them? If possible take the time to introduce yourself at some point.

##### **Families:**

How does the teacher make the parent connection happen? What does the teacher do to make all parents feel welcome? How do parents make the classroom connection? What organizations are available to support and facilitate parent participation? How many parents come to visit the classroom during the first few days of school?

#### **E. Continuing observations**

Your UCSC Supervisor may provide you with specific observation tasks to add to your notebook.