

**SITE VISITS AND PAPER
REQUIRED ELEMENTS
EDC-G 630**

30% of grade

Related to Objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5

Meets requirements for 5 pre-practicum hours

See Class Schedule in the Syllabus for Due Dates of Proposals and Paper

Because of the wide range of variability in inclusive settings, there is a field-based component in this class. In this assignment you will make one site visit to each of two (2) sites and report on what you observe, comparing it to text material.

The types of site include the following:

- a public school (preferably one with inclusive service delivery)
- a collaborative program
- a state approved private day school for students with disabilities
- a state approved residential school for students with disabilities

One interview may take place at your own school, in a setting different than your own. The other needs to be outside your district. If you do not work in a public school setting, one of your visits must be to a public school or collaborative setting. Urban settings are preferred.

By the date indicated on the course schedule, you will need to provide (in class or by email) the names and locations of the educators you propose to visit. Before sending this information, please ensure that you have confirmed your visit with the educator. If you have difficulty identifying settings, let me know so I can help you. ***Please note that it may take school personnel up to a week to return your phone calls. Plan ahead so this is not a problem for you.***

YOUR NAME:

Name of Practitioner #1:

Location:

Scheduled date of visit

Name of Practitioner #2:

Location:

Scheduled date of visit

Following the interviews, you will complete a single spaced paper (6 to 8 pages) addressing the information gleaned from both practitioners, as well as the requested reflections and text links. The 6 to 8 page length is a target; if you can be thorough in fewer pages, please do so; if you need one or two pages more to do your best, do so. The due date for this assignment is specified on the class schedule in the syllabus.

What to look for?

You are looking for real places to match to the discussions in class, the readings in your text and the definitions in the law. A set of Required Elements for your completion is at the end of this packet. These apply to each visit. The best papers will follow-up on provocative responses received from the teacher and make specific, direct connections to the text.

Arranging the visit

You are going to be visiting a school that is in the process of teaching many children. As you know, this will be a busy place. You will need to arrange your visit with the principal, teacher, director, or another person in charge. Leave a week to arrange these interviews. Teachers spend their days with children and have no secretaries and limited phone access, so it takes awhile for them to respond.

The first step in a good visit is good preparation. You will want to be:

- Clear in your purpose - "I am here as part of a UMass Boston course on inclusionary teaching. This purpose of this activity is to enable me to see actual settings for children."
- Respectful of the setting's constraints and schedules - "I would like to visit for about two hours. What time would be most convenient? What time would allow me to see the most interesting part of the day?"

(This is all suggested language - the substance is encouraged; the words should be your own.)

During and after the visit

You will be entering a busy and exciting place. Some ground rules will make your time there smooth.

Work to be:

- Prompt in your visit - Arrive when you say you will. And leave when you say you will. Two hours' visit will be sufficient - not enough, but sufficient.
- Unobtrusive in your presence - Your role is that of an observer. You will fit in best if you dress like the rest of the adults.
- Concerned with the teacher's preferences - "Is it best if I sit on the side (or back, or front) or mix with the students?" Abide by the teacher's preferences. He or she will be pleased you have asked and even more pleased when you comply with classroom preferences.
- Timely in your questions - Ask the teacher if he/she would be willing to answer some of your questions about what you see. If so, find out when the best time for questions would be. Some people might want to do this by phone rather than take time from the class.

- Courteous in your follow-up - Most teachers love to share their class and experience, but remember that you are a visitor and a guest. Follow-up with a thank you note and you may be on your way to a field placement later in your program.

Observation Notes

Take notes on each of the Required Elements as soon as possible; use these to write your paper. The paper you submit should be in word processed format, approximately 6 to 8 pages long, single spaced, with page numbers in the upper right corner. You can either answer the questions in turn or compose summary paragraphs about each of the areas of focus. What you report should be clear and thorough enough that I can understand the site you saw. The best papers will evoke images of the places you have visited and the teachers you have met.

NOTE

For each of these papers, please consult the Assignment Rubric so you will know what is most important.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS - SITE VISITS

Name of observer

Name of school/program and district:

Date of observation:

Hours children are in school:

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

1. Describe (or draw) the setting you observed.
2. How does the classroom look compared to a "typical" classroom?
3. What was on the walls of the room? What kind of student work could you see?
4. Who are the adults who work in this program? What are their roles?
5. If there are paraprofessionals, what are their responsibilities? Who guides their work?
How? When?

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?

6. How many children were in the program you visited?
7. Describe them (age, disability, gender, racial/ethnic group).

WHAT WERE THEY DOING?

8. What were the students doing when you visited? Who was working with them?
9. How did the teacher/s differentiate instruction to meet the range of students?
10. How did the teacher/s react to students who struggled with their work or behavior?

WHAT IS INCLUSION?

11. How often do the students interact with "typical" students of the same age?
12. What is the nature of that interaction? Who, if anyone, accompanies them?
13. Who delivers the special education services on the students' IEP? When? Where?
14. How often do the general and special education teachers collaborate on instruction? How does this compare to best practices described in the text?
15. Does the general education teacher attend IEP meetings? If so, is this valuable - and why? If not, why not?
16. How does the teacher define inclusion? What does he/she think of their school's inclusion work?
17. What does the teacher say about his/her role? What is most rewarding? Most challenging?
18. What one element would the teacher like to change? To keep the same? Why?

PARENTS

19. Who is the primary link between the school and parents of students with disabilities - the general education teacher, the special education teacher, the paraprofessional? What do the educators think about this arrangement? How does this compare with what you have learned from our texts?

OBSERVATIONS

20. What classroom rules and procedures were in place to guide the behavior of all learners? How did these compare with text material?
21. What strategies from our texts did you see in use? Which would you like most to emulate - why? Describe any additional strategies you observed.
22. Compare/contrast the programs/practices with information from MR&W. Be sure to address the authors' conceptions of inclusion as well as their guidelines for collaboration and effective classroom practices. You may choose to embed this information within your description of the site visits; if so, you do not need to repeat it here.
23. If your child needed these services, would you want him/her to go to school here? Why?
24. In your opinion, which delivered the best Free and Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment? Why? Use text and DESE material to support your decision.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

24. Include a completed self-assessment on the Assignment Rubric. **NOTE:** If you rate yourself as a 4 in any area, be sure you have met the requirements for that rating. If you rate yourself less than 4, take the opportunity to revise your work.