



SETTING UP AND MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OBSERVATION SITE

As part of Northeastern University’s commitment to experiential learning, each of your courses will require that you spend a certain amount of time in an ESL/EFL classroom. This is not only a great way to see your learning in action, but also offers an opportunity for you to network, meet peers in the field, and discover which area of TESOL is of greatest interest to you.

Following are instructions for setting up your observation site:

- 1. Start early.** You must have an observation site in place and confirmed by your instructor *by the end of the first week of class* in order to participate in the class.
- 2. Research.** You need to stay at one site for the duration of your TESOL course. Therefore, be sure to pick an appropriate site for your interests and needs. See below for tips on how to begin to research an observation site.

If your interest is:	Then:
Higher Ed	<p>Look on the internet for universities or community colleges near you. When you get to their website, do a search for ESL or English Language.</p> <p>Call universities or community colleges in your area and ask which Department provides English language services.</p> <p>If you are outside the USA, contact your local university to see if they provide EFL classes.</p> <p>Note-be sure that you are observing ESL or EFL classes, not classes within the English Department or discipline, e.g. English Literature.</p>
Commercial	<p>Check online or in the yellow pages for paid programs. There are a number of large commercial ESL providers; e.g. Kaplan, English First, etc.</p>
Community based organizations	<p>Start with the literacy directory: www.literacydirectory.org</p> <p>Perform a Google search for your state and “immigrant,” e.g. “Minnesota + ESL + immigrant.” If you want to narrow the search, try your city, versus your state.</p> <p>Inquire at your local or city government office for adult ESL classes.</p>
K-12	<p>If you are already a teacher, ask in your school. Note, however, that you will be required to observe in more than one place throughout the course of the TESOL program. Keep this in mind when choosing observation sites.</p> <p>If you are not a teacher already, contact the principal of a local school to see if there are ESL classes. You will most likely need to get special permission so keep this in mind when planning to observe at the K-12 level.</p>

Once you have selected an organization:

3. **Contact.** Call or e-mail the organization and discuss what you would like to do.
4. **Introduce yourself.** Once you've found an acceptable organization and class, write a letter of introduction to the instructor (see below: Letter of Introduction).
5. **Schedule.** Decide with the instructor when you will observe classes.
6. **Investigate.** Find out as much information about the organization/school as you can to help you understand the context of the classroom you are observing.
7. **Document your experience.** Fill out the observation site form (see below: Observation Site Information Sheet) and send to your instructor or post to your class as instructed by your professor. Bring your observation log (see below: Classroom Observation Log) to each class you observe and have the instructor sign off for you.
8. **Thank you letter.** When you finish your observation, be sure to write a letter to the instructor (and class if you like) thanking them for letting you participate in their class.

Many students find calling a site and asking if it is possible to observe to be intimidating. Be assured that observation is an integral part of being a teacher and the organization/school will not find it strange that you are asking.

Enjoy your observation—you will learn much!!

TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OBSERVATION

1. Go in early. Since you will be observing and not helping in most classes, try to go to class early and help the instructor. Offer help in—correcting papers, doing research, finding materials etc.
2. Never be late for class.
3. If possible, review the curriculum so you have an idea of what will be happening in the class when you are there.
4. Set up your observation schedule and give it to the instructor so they know when you will be in the class.
5. Stick to your observation schedule!
6. Stop by the central office or administration area to say hello when you go to your site—this will go a long way in forming networking relationships.
7. Dress and act professionally when in the classroom.
8. Be friendly and be appreciative.
9. Remember that the teacher you are observing is doing you a favor. NEVER give teaching suggestions or critique the teacher.
10. Be strategic when choosing your site and make the most of your time there. Your observation site is where you will meet others in the profession. This is the best time for you to network.



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OBSERVATION SITE INFORMATION FORM

What is your site's name, address, and phone number?

Briefly describe the organization where you will observe. (You can find this from the organization's website, literature, or by talking to someone at the organization.)

What is the name of the class that you will be observing?

What type of class will you observe (e.g. Writing, TOEFL prep, Survival etc.)? Try to include as much information as possible.

What is the description of the student's level?

What is the full name, title, and degree of the teacher whom you will observe (please note that you should be only be observing an instructor who has appropriate TESOL qualifications?)

What is the e-mail address and telephone number of the teacher whom you will observe?



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CLASSROOM OBSERVATION LOG

NU Student Name _____

School/Organization Name _____ Subject(s) _____

Grade Level _____ Level _____

Cooperating Teacher _____ Title _____

TOTAL HOURS TEACHING:

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Initials	Weekly Total
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
Grand Total							

Date

Signature of Instructor of Record

Please turn this form into your instructor when you are finished your observation hours



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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

As a matter of procedure, as well as courtesy, you should write a letter of introduction to the instructor with whom you plan to work. Your letter should include the following:

1. A brief description yourself and what brings you to their classroom.
2. Briefly explain why you would like to observe in the class.
3. Explain to the instructor that the course will require some time outside the class for discussion with the instructor. Ask how the instructor would like to communicate; in person after class, via e-mail, telephone, etc.
4. Give your timeline; when you will start and finish, as well as which classes you will attend etc.
5. Indicate that you are looking forward to the experience and give one or two distinct examples of what you hope to see, learn, do, accomplish (you should be able to use the class syllabus (if available) for this point). Briefly discuss the spirit of collegiality and mentorship in the teaching profession and close your letter.

There should be a space at the bottom of the letter to indicate the instructor's agreement and signature.