Educational Context Paper

Background Information:

In one page¹ (single spaced) address the following areas:

1. Briefly talk about the structure of your placement: What type of school is it (magnet, charter, rural, urban, middle school, elementary, etc.)? What is the typical schedule for this school? What are the demographics—race, class/income, gender, etc.—for the school?

2. Discuss your students: About how many students are in the classes you observe? What system of ability tracking is in place? What do you see in terms of ability variation in the classroom? What are the demographics for the classes you observe? What grade levels are in your classes? About how many students receive special services (ESL, special ed accommodations, etc.)?

3. Discuss the curriculum: What textbooks are used (title, publisher, year)? What other resources are commonly used in the classroom? What teaching strategies are typical in the classrooms you observe?

Narrative:

In one page (single spaced) discuss the following topics in essay form—do not simply answer questions as you would in a worksheet:

- Student development: What prior skills do the students bring with them to the classroom? What are their academic needs? Social needs? Language needs?
- Social interaction: How do the students express themselves, form relationships, navigate conflict, interact with the teacher, get along with each other?
- Family and community contexts: What kinds of knowledge from outside of school benefit students? What are their cultural backgrounds? What do you know about their family structures? How is student access to technology? What other home and community resources are available to students or do students regularly use?
- Curriculum and instruction: What is the impact of the curriculum and teaching strategies in the classroom? How do pacing, verbal communication from the teacher, assessments, planning, and other elements of instruction impact the classroom? How does the teacher keep students motivated? How does the teacher make sure to address the academic needs of the students?

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Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Scoring/Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Missing topics or extremely brief, needed to gather more information</td>
<td>All topics addressed, some of them too briefly</td>
<td>Extremely thorough discussion of all topics</td>
<td>_____ x 2 = _____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Missing topics or extremely brief, needed to gather more information</td>
<td>All topics addressed, some of them too briefly</td>
<td>Extremely thorough discussion of all topics</td>
<td>_____ x 2 = _____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication and Organization</td>
<td>Many errors that hinder comprehension</td>
<td>Errors are in the paper but they do not hinder comprehension</td>
<td>Virtually no errors in the paper, paper is well organized</td>
<td>_____ x 1 = _____</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grading: 23-25 A; 20-22 B; 17-19 C; 15-16 D; 0-14 F

Total: _____

¹ Note that the page requirements are guidelines only—you may exceed this page amount if needed.