

# Classroom Observation as a Reflective Process to Enhance Student Learning

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## Introduction

- The goal of a teaching observation can differ among the stakeholders involved—faculty, administration, teaching center staff—and the individual conducting it.
- Traditionally, an observation of teaching is viewed as an evaluative event that consists of a single classroom visit and often results in summative data.
- While observations can serve summative purposes, studies show that well-conducted observations focus on formative and generative feedback, which ideally, leads to reflective change (Chism, 2007; Millis, 1992), and can also help faculty take ownership and authorship of their teaching practice.

## Objective

- As staff of TCU's teaching center, the purpose of our work was to reframe a traditionally evaluative observation process into a more generative one that focuses on formative feedback and incorporates guided self-reflection.

## Method

- Over successive semesters beginning in Fall 2018, we engaged in initial Action Research to develop and refine the observation process.

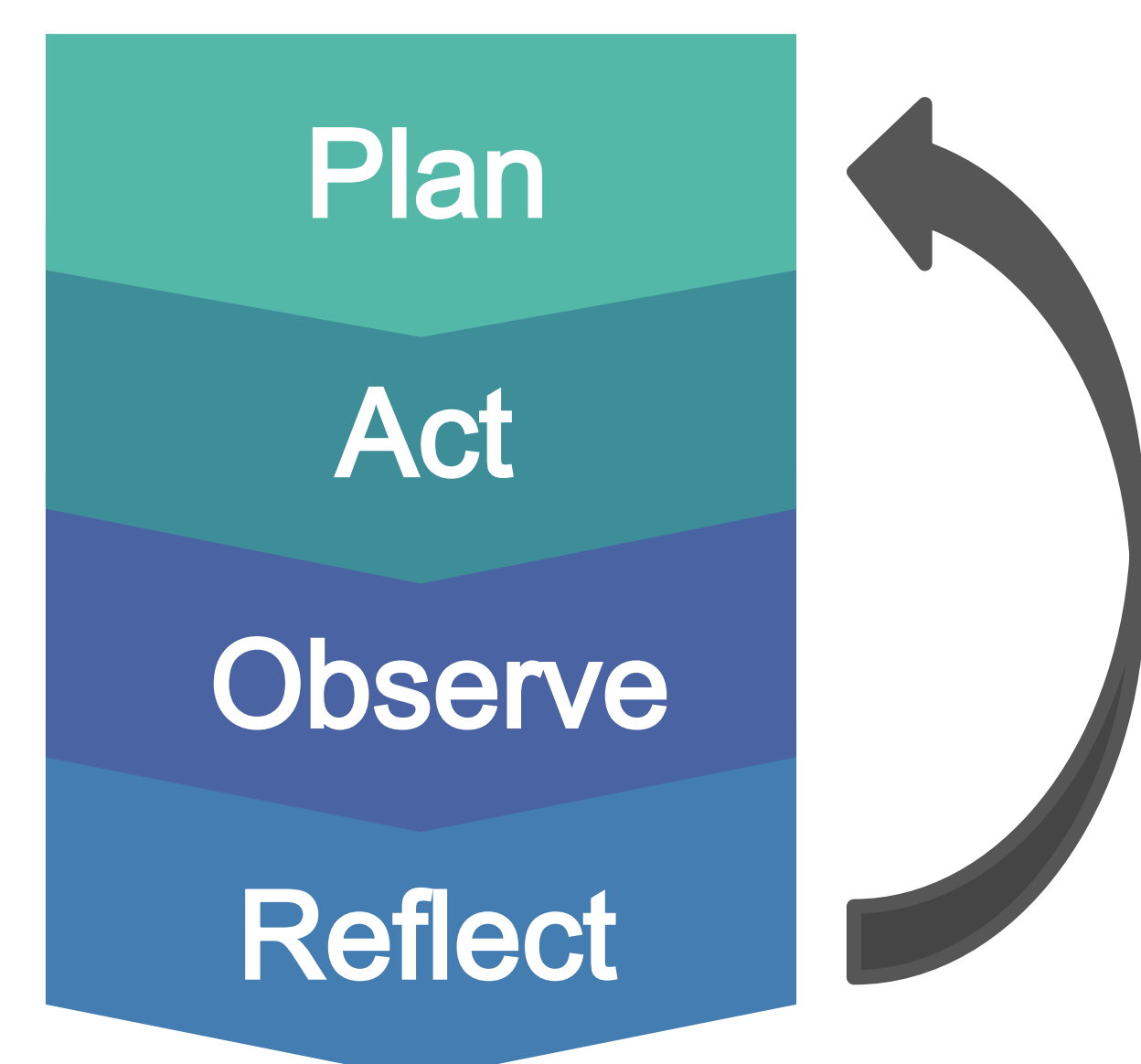


Figure 1. Adapted from Schwandt (2015).

## Koehler Center Classroom Observation Process

In addition to reframing the observation as a reflective process, the six components of the process each went through multiple iterations of development and revision, the highlights of which are further elaborated below.

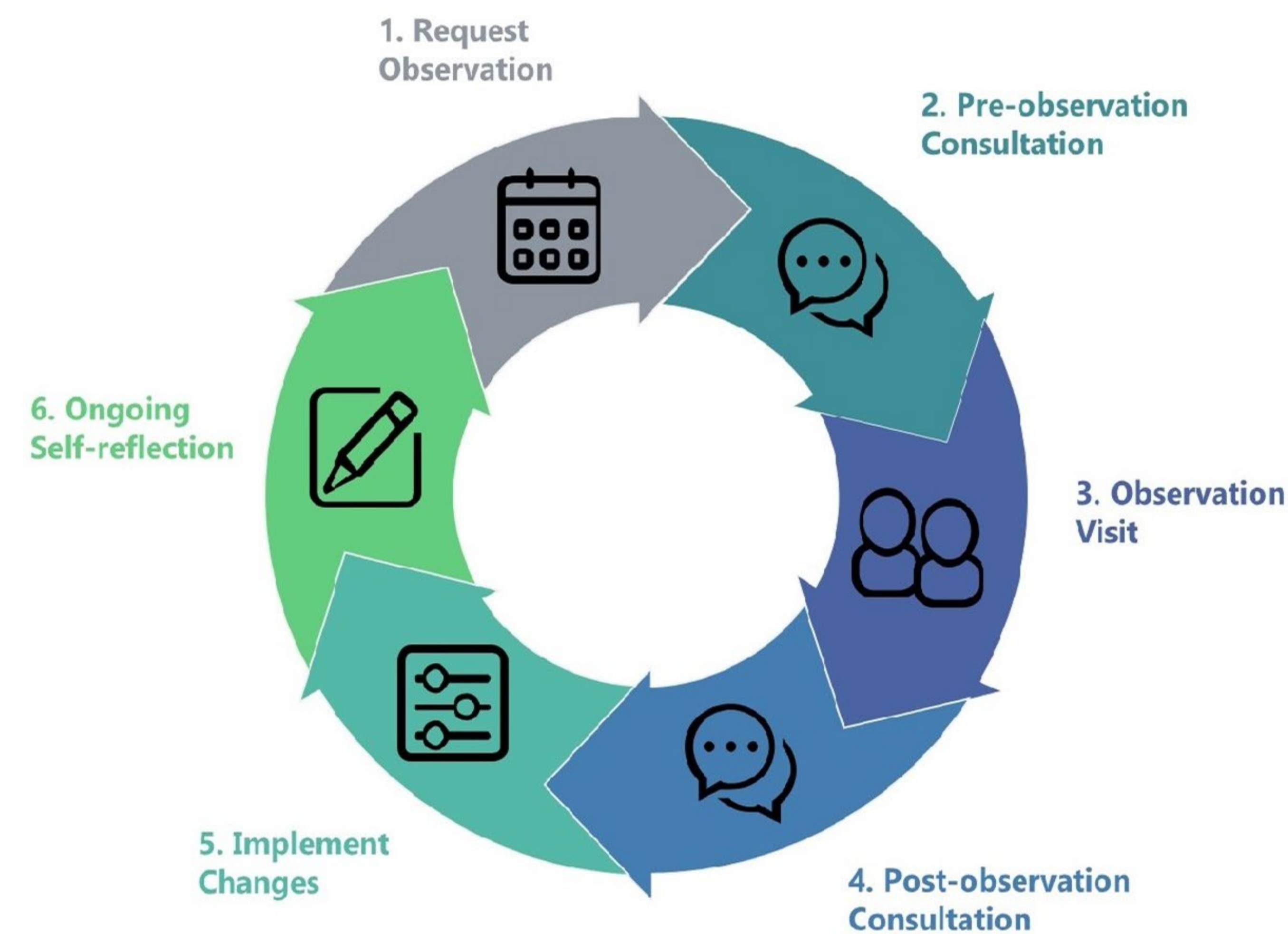


Figure 2. Diagram of the Koehler Center Classroom Observation Process.

### 1) Request Observation

Rebranding & marketing the Classroom Observation to:

- change faculty perception
- formalize the requesting process & timeline
- align process with our larger programmatic goals

### 2) Pre-observation Consultation

Utilizing guiding materials to:

- intentionally structure the conversation
- encourage faculty to explore & self-identify goals
- reinforce faculty self-reflection & agency

### 3) Observation Visit

Creating an interdisciplinary, single-point rubric to:

- guide & focus the observation
- highlight evidence-based principles & practices
- construct generative, formative feedback

### 4) Post-observation Consultation

Situating faculty as collaborators to:

- co-construct & receive feedback
- highlight existing strengths & generate new ideas or possible changes
- expand language around teaching practices

### 5) Implement Changes

Empowering faculty to:

- take action toward self-identified goals
- note changes in student learning
- solicit feedback & engage in self-reflection

### 6) Ongoing Self-reflection:

Creating generative resources for faculty to:

- identify new & transferable skills
- write a self-reflection statement
- become a reflective teacher-practitioner

## Discussion

As a result of reframing this process:

- Faculty are able to make direct connections between their teaching practices and student learning.
- Faculty see student engagement and activities as opportunities to gather data about student learning in order to inform decisions about their teaching practice.
- Faculty are able to see classroom observations as cyclical processes contributing to their ongoing pedagogical growth and refinement.
- Faculty are exposed to a formative rubric that serves as both a feedback tool and a teaching tool.
- Faculty are expanding their language to describe their pedagogical practices and identify areas of growth.
- Faculty report feeling less intimidated and are more open to receiving feedback and discussing their teaching practices.
- More faculty are engaging in the observation process as a way to grow their teaching.

## References

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