Observation Protocols: Improving Consistency, Increasing Quality

**Introduction**
Teachers deserve observations that accurately assess their practice. Additionally, observations should provide valuable feedback and promote professional growth. The quality of observations and conferences can be improved by designing and implementing consistent protocols. The protocols below provide common anchor points for observers and focus attention on the key aspects of high-quality observations. These protocols view the observation process as a cycle that spans multiple classroom visits and includes follow-up and monitoring between observations.

**Observation Cycle and Associated Protocols**

1: **Plan for the Observation (face-to-face pre-conference is best practice)**
- Review the lesson plan, handouts, and other class materials; identify key standards and intended learning objective(s).
- Review instructional strategies; assess their appropriateness for engaging students.
- Examine related assessment; determine how formative and summative results are driving instruction.
- Check the pacing guide; ensure that instruction is on schedule.
- When possible, engage in a pre-conference prior to observing. Solicit teacher input on practices or activities for focused feedback.

2: **Observe (collect high quality evidence)**
- Collect evidence of teaching and learning that is consistently objective and specific.
- Collect quantitative and qualitative evidence that captures the observed behavior and speech of the teacher and students.
- Assign the evidence accurately by attaching it to the appropriate indicators or standards.
- Gather authentic quotes from students and teacher that reflect the teaching and learning being observed.

3: **Prepare for the Post-observation Conference (5-Step Feedback Protocol)**
- Review the evidence collected in the classroom, as well as other related data, including student learning data, and prior observations.
- Plan praise for this teacher.
- Identify an area for professional growth.
- Develop an evidence-based action step to improve classroom practice.
- Design inquiry questions that will engage the teacher in reflective dialogue and validate the action step.
- Prepare the written report using the Classroom Observation Report Quality Rubric.
- Ensure that the written feedback includes the praise, area for professional growth, and action step(s) planned for the post-classroom observation conference.

4: **Engage in Reflective Dialogue/Provide Feedback (Modeling Feedback Protocol)**
- Praise, inquire, and lead the teacher to the selected action step.
- Collaboratively plan implementation of the action step in the classroom.
- Support professional growth through monitoring and follow-up.
- Incorporate any modifications or points of clarification into the observation report.