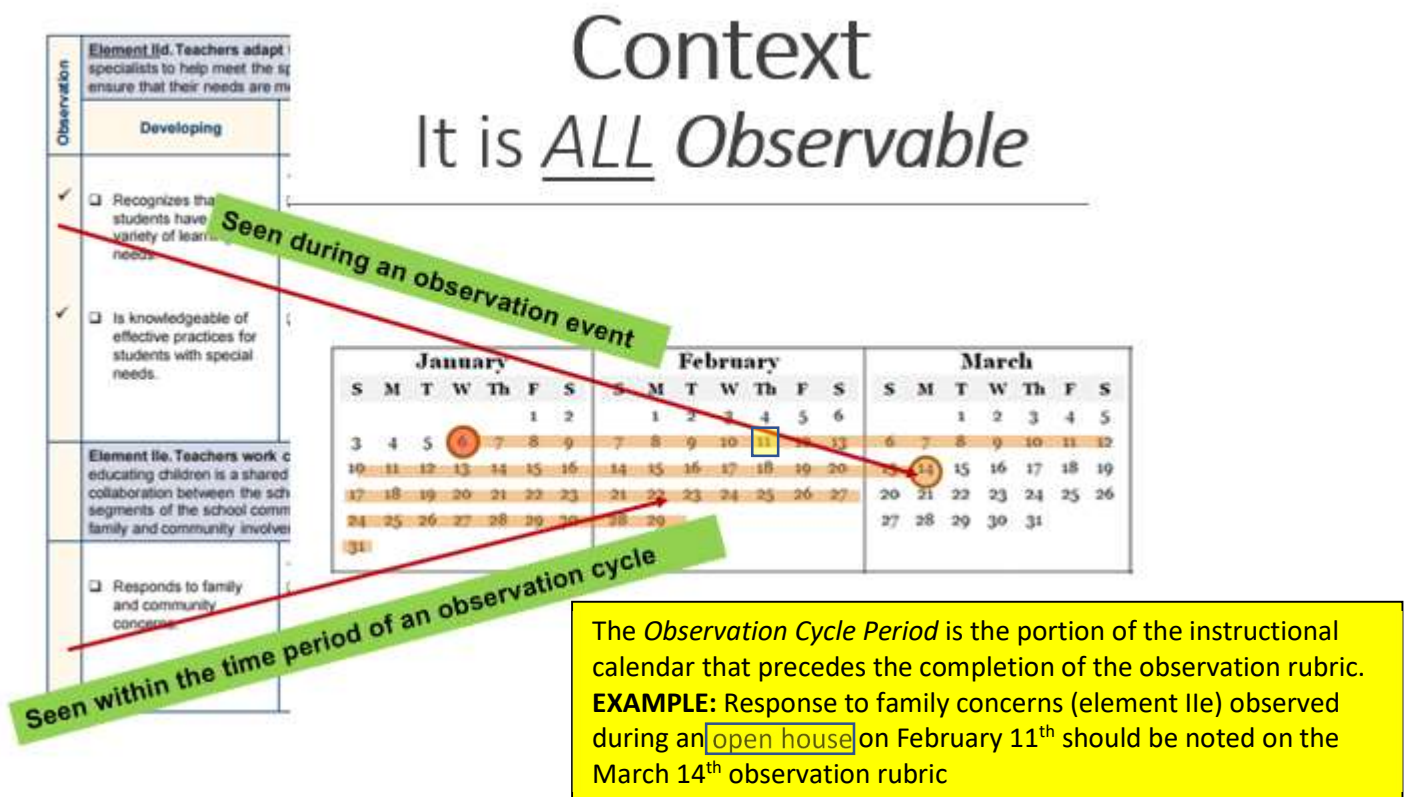


# Observing Professional and Instructional Practices

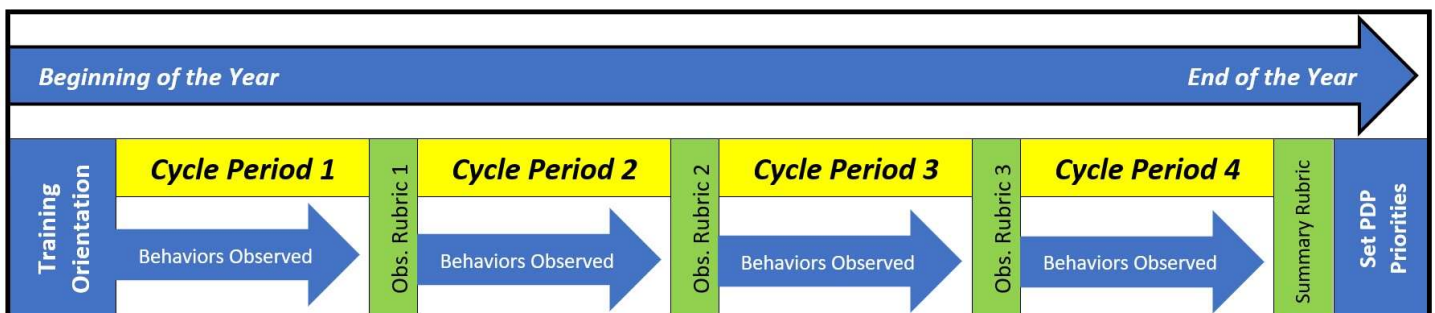
While most educators refer to the NCEES rubrics completed throughout the year as “*observation rubrics*,” only a portion of the information collected on these rubrics comes from the direct observation of instruction.

Administrators must consider multiple contexts as they support and assess the practices of educators. Each year, evaluators observe instructional activities and events to gather specific information about a teacher’s *instructional practices*, while interactions within the broader school environment serve to reveal the teacher’s *professional practices*.

There are more than 244 individual descriptors of practice in the NCEES rubric. Of these, 108 (about 45%) are specifically visible within instruction. These are identified in the rubric as, “observation” elements. To assess the remaining, “non-observation” behaviors, an evaluator must consider and collect information from activities and events that occur outside of the instructional event. For example, in Standard II, the descriptor, “*Responds to family and community concerns*” is a professional behavior that should occur separate from instructional activities (and would in fact disrupt instruction were it to take place during a lesson). This is an example of a “non-observation” descriptor that should be assessed during the **Observation Cycle Period** and recorded on the very next NCEES observation rubric.



An **Observation Cycle Period** is the duration of time that precedes the submission of each NCEES rubric during the year, as well as the time period between the last observation and the completion of the Summary Rating Form. The illustration below represents the observation cycle periods that exist in a Standard Evaluation Plan.



## Observing Professional and Instructional Practices

Contexts that may provide evidence of a teacher's professional practices include (but are not limited to):

- School-based committees
- Subject and/or grade-level teams
- Professional Learning Communities
- School Improvement processes
- Communication with students and families
- School community engagement
- Interactions with colleagues
- Conversations with the educator

In addition to these activities and events, professional and instructional practices are also visible within classroom activities. So, at various points throughout the year, evaluators must visit instructional spaces, and record the practices observed on the NCEES rubric to help teachers grow and improve. In order to provide timely feedback that may be of the greatest benefit to teachers, this rubric should be completed within ten days of the classroom visit.

It is essential to capture evidence observed during instruction and within an observation cycle period, to document a teacher's professional and instructional practices on the rubric, so this information will be available at the end of the year. However, procedures for collecting teacher-practice data at the time of an observation differ from what is required when these data are processed at the end of the year to provide **Summary Ratings** for evaluation.

To complete the rubric after observing instruction, the observer/evaluator should do the following:

- Consider both the *instructional practices* visible within the instructional activities and the professional practices that occurred within the current Observation Cycle Period.
- Mark the descriptors for actions that were observed in the teacher's instructional and professional practices (include all elements, not just those marked as visible during ✓ **Observation**).
- Disregard the rubric features that are only relevant to the summary rating process:
  - The *Developing, Proficient, Accomplished, Distinguished* column labels
  - The "...and" notations within the rubric
- Check off any descriptors observed in each element row, without concern for the left-to-right progression (check what you see and what you know to be true).
- Mark any other descriptors that the post-conference discussion and/or artifacts reveal should be added.
- Write detailed comments and feedback in the comment boxes, as appropriate.
- Secure required signatures.

Activities and interactions between teachers and administrators offer a variety of contexts for assessing and improving teacher practices and outcomes. Rubrics completed after observing instruction, and the discussions that follow observations allow administrators to support and assist teachers to refine and align the professional and instructional behaviors the NCEES rubric addresses.

Together the evidences gathered within each observation cycle and the interactions between the teacher and evaluator throughout the year offer the data and information necessary for the principal to determine the teacher's level of performance on the elements within the NCEES rubric, and provide a summary evaluation for each of the five overall standards at the end of the year.